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Silence in the Valley of Songs



by

ཟུལ་འཕྱོགས་ལ། Zla ba sgrol ma

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མཉམ་ཞེས་པའི་སྐད་ཀྱི་གསལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་གསལ་བྱེད་

Silence in the Valley of Songs:
Work Songs from Sman shod Valley

by
ཟེ་བ་སྒོ་ལ་མ། Zla ba sgrol ma

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Front Cover: Men ram a wall while singing a wall-building song and dancing. Rdzong sar Monastery, Mda' ma Township, Sde dge County, Dkar mdzes Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China. Photograph by Zla ba sgrol ma. October 2009.

Back Cover: An areal view of the construction site. October 2009.

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The images in this book include sacred images of *gtor ma*, *bla ma*, and mountain deities and should be treated respectfully.

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Finally, I thank my family for allowing me to follow my own path and supporting me while this book was created.

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<http://www.oralliterature.org/collections/zlaba001.html>

RESPONDENTS

A dkar mtsho

A dkar mtsho (female, 1922-2010) provided information on and examples of *mgur mo*. She was my oldest respondent. She was constantly afraid that she would die at the unlucky age of eighty-one. However, she lived through her eighty-first year. In early 2010, she could walk around her home and visit her neighbors. She enjoyed caring for her family, feeding the family dogs, checking for livestock that might wander into other's fields, and watching livestock grazing on the mountains. She knew melodies of several working songs but had forgotten the lyrics, as she had not sung them for a long time when I interviewed her. She enjoyed watching TV, especially folk song performances, and thought there were too few Tibetan songs performed on TV. She knew how to turn off the TV, but did not know how to turn it on, and asked her grandchildren to do this. She passed away 8 December 2010.

Bkra shis rdo rje

Bkra shis rdo rje (male, born 1927) provided a plowing speech and information about agriculture. His grandfather taught him how to cast bronze statues and to forge and process silver. He was his grandfather's best student. Such traditional activities were prohibited during the Cultural Revolution. In 1982 he began teaching his skills to local young people. When I asked why he teaches them without payment, he said, "I am a Buddhist and I like to help people. Many of my students were hunters and their families were very poor. After becoming my students they promised to stop hunting, smoking, drinking, and killing animals. Preventing hunting is payment for my work. And if I let them pay, what could they give me? They hardly have enough food for themselves." (Figure 1. Bkra shis rdo rje. February 2010).¹

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all images are by Zla ba sgrol ma.



Dben zen

Dben zen, (male, born 1940) provided an account of Sman shod history. Children and old people enjoy talking to him and hearing his many stories, for which he is locally well known. Locals often comment on his prodigious memory and ability to remember past events so clearly that he relates them as though they happened yesterday. His family members are pastoralists and he was a pastoralist and a tailor in the past. He began staying at home chanting *ma Ni* beginning in 2008. He sometimes does tailoring work. (Figure 2. Dben zen with his granddaughter. February 2010).



A bo ma

A bo ma (male, born 1947) provided information on and examples of male dancing songs. Considered handsome, he is always the dance leader whenever villagers hold a party, ritual, or festival – testimony to his local fame. Though sixty-three years old in 2010, he remained the best male lead dancer in DzaM mda' Village. He is also a tailor. (Figure 3. A bo ma. February 2010).



Blo gros phun tshogs

Blo gros phun tshogs (male, born 1948) provided an account of Sman shod history. He is Director, Management Committee, of Rdzong sar Monastery; Vice-president, Rdzong sar Five Sciences Buddhist Seminary; President, Rdzong sar Monastery Tibetan Hospital; a researcher at Dkar mdzes Prefecture Tibetan Medical Academy; and Vice Secretary General, Sde dge County Buddhist Institute. Among his ten living children, two are doctors, one is a *bla ma*, one works in his father's organization, the two youngest daughters graduated from university, and the other four girls are married farmers. Sman shod locals respect him as a leader. (Figure 4. Blo gros phun tshog. February 2010).



Tshong lha mo

Tshong lha mo (female, born 1953) provided information on and examples of female dancing songs. She is the most famous female dance leader in DzaM mda' Village. Among her three children, one daughter is in senior middle school in Kangding, the other lives with her and helps with housework, and her only son attends school in India. Her husband is a carpenter. She enjoys dancing and happily agrees whenever villagers ask her to lead the female dancers. (Figure 5. Tshong lha mo. February 2010).



Bo nyed

Bo nyed (female, born 1954) provided information on and examples of *la yug*, *mgur ma*, *a la*, *a la phyo*, *ma Ni* songs, and milking songs. She is a well-known local singer and enjoys singing folk songs. She is uninterested in singing modern songs and has never tried to do so. One of her two daughters stays at home to help with housework while the other attends junior middle school in the county town. She had about seventy yaks and some fields but sold all her livestock and bought a few *mdzo mo* to support herself in 2007. She is now too old to work as much as before. (Figure 6. Bo nyed. February 2010).



Sgron g.yang

Sgron g.yang (female, born 1957) provided information on and an example of a milking song. She was born in a herding family and married Bkra shis rdo rje, a farmer. They have four sons of whom three are monks. The youngest studies handicrafts with his father. She enjoys singing, and watching and listening to performances of modern Tibetan songs on TV. (Figure 7. Sgron g.yang. February 2010).



Skar ma chos 'dzin

Skar ma chos 'dzin (male, born 1989) provided information on and examples of building songs. Locals consider him a good singer. He enjoys singing while working. When I asked him how he knew the building songs, he said, "I often go to villagers' homes to ram walls, and people sing them then. Also, if I ram walls while singing and dancing with friends, I really enjoy the work and don't feel tired. I cannot sing all of the building songs, and neither can other young people. They no longer learn them." (Figure 8. Skar ma chos 'dzin standing in the yard with his ramming tool. February 2010).



Bya bkra rdo rje

Bya bkra rdo rje (male, born 1949) provided information about plowing songs and an example of such a song. He has lived alone since his wife passed away. They had no children. Locals often ask his assistance in agricultural tasks. When he plows, he sings the plowing song. When I asked him why, he said, "People always sang it in the past when plowing, because plowing kills many insects in the soil, and the song can cleanse this sin. In addition, the song encourages the *mdzo* and eases its burden."

SELF-INTRODUCTION

I was born in 1990 in DzaM mda' Village, Phu ma Township, Sde dge County, Dkar mdzes Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China. I grew up in an agro-pastoral family with my younger brother, father, mother, grandmother, and two cousins, who are like siblings to me. An older brother also lived with us, married, and stayed in our old house when we built a new house nearby. When I was six years old I began to herd with my cousins on the summer pasture. In winter I collected firewood in nearby forests.

I became very ill when I was nine years old. As a last resort, Father took me to Chengdu City, the capital of Sichuan. That was my first time to be in a car, to leave Sman shod Valley, to see Han Chinese, to hear another language, to see tall concrete buildings, to see people eating insects, and my first time to feel alone in the midst of thousands of people.

It is difficult to distinguish good from bad. Because of that sickness I nearly died, but because of that sickness my parents decided to send me to school instead of keeping me at home. I started to study in grade two of a boarding primary school in Sde dge County Town when I was ten years old. I knew a little Tibetan writing and reading, because my uncle had taught me. Fate had given me a second chance at life. I was the oldest child in my class and the teachers pushed me to study hard. When I turned fourteen I was promoted to study in Dg edge Middle School, the only middle school in Sde dge County at that time.

I was second from the bottom in my class during my first semester. I was extremely unhappy about that and worked very hard. The next term I was the top student. In 2007 at the age of seventeen, I graduated from Sde dge Middle School, and went on to study in the English Training Program (ETP) at Qinghai Normal University, even though I had also been accepted into senior middle schools in Chengdu and in Kangding. Joining ETP was the second milestone in my life. I studied English in ETP for two years, and began working on this book in July 2009.

INTRODUCTION

Bo nyed, (born 1954) discusses the diminishing importance of folk songs in the Sman shod area:

At that time (1940s-1960s) we sang constantly as we harvested. We had songs for every kind of work, and sang from morning to night. If someone wanted to chase a girl, he sang a love song to show his feelings and never directly said, "I love you." If you had a boyfriend very far away, he would send a song if he wanted to let you know he was missing you. He would sing that song to a messenger and the messenger would relay that song to someone else. Eventually the girl would get the message and reply in the same way. They used songs to keep in touch. But now, you cannot see anyone singing these songs to each other. People like pop songs. Young people prefer to sing modern songs. No one sings local songs anymore; instead they imitate everything they see on TV and in movies.

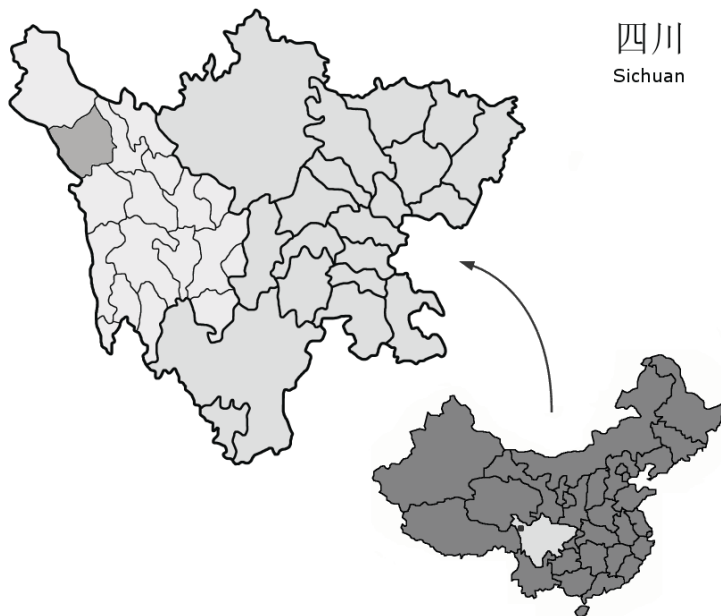
In the past, we were so happy to sing those songs. We never got tired if we sang while working. We worked from morning to evening and sang the whole time.

Some years ago a local *bla ma* asked people if there was anyone who could sing *mgur ma*.² I was the only woman who could, even though I am forgetting the lyrics as I age. I still sing *mgur ma* the whole day while I cut grass. Not even my own daughter wants to learn *mgur ma* from me and I never forced her to learn. I never sing modern songs. I have never tried and I never want to. I don't like them at all. My mother really liked to sing, too.

In the past we sang constantly, but now people don't sing no matter where they are or what they are doing. Now everyone is silent.

² *Mgur ma* are sung while cutting grass for livestock.

PART ONE: THE SMAN SHOD AREA



Map One. Sde dge County in Dkar mdzes Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China. This map was created by Wikimedia user Croquant (<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Croquant>) and is used under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license.



Map Two. The Sman shod Valley. This map was created by G.yu thog yon tan ngon pos man bcos gter gnas (Yuthok Yondengonpo Medical Association).

Geographic Location

Sman shod is a remote valley on the eastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau in Sde dge County, Dkar mdzes Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province. The area includes all of Phu ma, Mda' ma, and Hyo ba townships. Its center is approximately 100 kilometers from Sde dge County Town. Sman shod is located at the intersection of EO 98° 57' 80° 8' and N 31° 38' 57° 51'.³ It is 5,000 square kilometers in area and has an average altitude of 3,500 meters. The temperature is 5-10°C in spring, 10-20°C in summer, 5-10°C in autumn, and -15-5°C in winter. Snow, rocks, and forests cover the mountains. Many rare, beautiful flowers, and rich fields adorn the plain. First and second level nationally protected wildlife reside in the mountains, including leopards, deer, and such birds as Tibetan eared pheasants, snow cocks, and white cranes. There are also such precious herbs as caterpillar fungus⁴ and snow lotus, and such minerals as gold, copper, and iron. In the past, there were plentiful resources and plant and animal species.

Sman shod Valley follows the Sman chu River as it flows northwest to southeast. About 2.5 hours on motorcycle are required to ride from the uppermost reaches of the valley to the mouth of the valley. Administratively, the valley passes through three townships in Sde dge County – Phu ma, Mda' ma, and Hyo pa. The lower reaches of the valley on the northeast bank of the river pass through Sting lhung Township, Dpal yul County. The upper valley is covered in fields and is higher and colder than the lower valley, which is covered by dense forest. Pastures are located on unnamed tributaries of the Sman chu and surrounding hills.

Sman shod residents consider those living closest to the valley's main urban center, Mda' ma, to be least

³ Information on the location and climate of Sman shod Valley is based on an anonymous, undated pamphlet published by G.yu thog yon tan mgon pos man bcos gter gnas (Yuthok Yondengonpo Medical Association).

⁴ *Cordyceps sinensis* is a valuable medicinal substance collected and sold to generate income.

traditional. For example, women in this area do not braid their hair or wear traditional hair ornaments. Villages further away from Mda' ma, especially those in Phu ma, are thought to maintain traditions more conservatively. A description of valley settlements from the upper to lower valley follows.

The uppermost township, Phu ma, has seven administrative villages⁵ – Rma thang, Mkha' gsar, Upper DzaM mda' (DzaM mda' yar gron), Lower DzaM mda' (DzaM mda' mar grong), Ci jo, Rtsis thog, and Rgyal rgan – spread along a single dirt road that runs northwest to southeast along the valley. Rma thang is the uppermost village, located in the northwest part of the valley, below Gwa gu Mountain, home to Gwa gu Hermitage. Rma thang Village has seventy-two households. Village artisans are renowned for their drawing and painting skills.

One kilometer along the road from Rma thang is Mkha' gsar Administrative Village, with one hundred households in two hamlets: Mkha' gsar and Mkha' zhabs. Mkha' gsar is one kilometer along the road from Mkha' zhabs.

Half a kilometer further along the road is Upper DzaM mda' Hamlet, part of DzaM mda' Administrative Village. Upper DzaM mda' has eighty-three households and its artisans are famous for spinning and weaving. Lower DzaM mda' is Phu ma Township's administrative center. The township government administrative office is located on the west side of the Sman chu River. Phu ma Primary School is east of the river, opposite the Phu ma government office. There is one convenience store beside the Phu ma government office and another beside Phu ma Primary School. Artisans in Lower DzaM mda' (Figures 10 and 11) are well known for pottery, making clay sculptures, and casting gold, silver, and bronze (Figure 12). Lower DzaM

⁵ An administrative village is an officially recognized government unit. However, villagers recognize locations based on locally clustered groups of houses, which we refer to as hamlets. Occasionally an administrative village may consist of a single hamlet, but more commonly several hamlets comprise one village.

mda' Village has eighty-four households with three hamlets: Lower DzaM mda', DzaM nang, and Skye le. DzaM nang Hamlet is located along a tributary one kilometer northeast of Lower DzaM mda' Hamlet and Skye le is about two kilometers along the road from Lower DzaM mda'.

Ci jo Administrative Village is one kilometer along this road from Skye le. Ci jo has sixty households in two hamlets: Ci jo nang and Ci jo mda'. Ci jo nang is located in the upper reaches of a tributary to the Sman chu, and Ci jo mda' straddles the Sman chu, one kilometer to the northwest. Motorcycles can travel along a road between these two hamlets but not cars (Figure 13).

One kilometer along the road from Ci jo mda' is Rtsis thog Administrative Village with seventy-four households in a single hamlet. Artisans in this village are renowned for weaving and tailoring.

The final village of Phu ma Township is Rgyal rgan Administrative Village with fifty-six households in a single hamlet. Rdzong sar Monastery is located on a mountain east of the stream from this village.

The next township to the southeast is Mda' ma Township, consisting of 1,865 people in seven administrative villages: 'Bol yul, Ham mda, Nyin mo gzhung, Ri kha, Rtse dung, Sgo khang, and Rong me. In the northeast of the township is 'Bol yul with seventy-nine households, situated on both sides of the Sman chu River. The village is at the foot of the mountain where Rdzong sar Monastery is located and consists of a single hamlet. It takes around twenty minutes to climb the mountain from the village to Rdzong sar Monastery, which belongs to the Sa skya Sect. Gad dmar khug Market is also located below Rdzong sar Monastery on the southeast side of the Sman chu (Figure 14). This market is a center for all townships in Sman shod Valley. Renowned wood carvers and *thang kha*⁶ painters congregate here. Rdzong sar Seminary and a new temple are also located in

⁶ *Thang kha* are traditional Tibetan religious images painted, embroidered, or applied on cloth. They are considered offerings to the Buddha and are hung on the walls of temples and household shrines.

Gad dmar khug Market. Two Han Chinese who speak the local Tibetan dialect operate restaurants in the market. Across the river from Gad dmar khug Market, west of the Sman chu, is Ham mda', which has fifty households. Mda' ma Primary School is located in Ham mda' Village.

Walking east from Gad dmar khug Market for twenty minutes along the main road brings the pedestrian to Nyin mo gzhung Hamlet with eighty-three households. Southeast of Nyin mo gzhung is Rdzong sar Tibetan Hospital. A ten-minute walk southeast from Rdzong sar Tibetan Hospital is Ri kha Hamlet, with sixty-eight households (Figure 15).

One kilometer along the road from Ri kha Village, on the slopes of hills on the east bank of the Sman chu, is Rtse dung Village with sixty-nine households. Northeast of Rtse dung Village is Sgo khang Village, situated along a tributary on the east side of the Sman chu.

These two administrative villages form a large hamlet locally called Rtse dung. Sgo khang is located on a tributary on the east side of the Sman chu with sixty-five households. Three kilometers northeast of Ri kha Village is the last village of Mda' ma Township: Rong me Hamlet, with sixty-four households.

The third township, Hyo pa, is a one-hour car trip from Mda' ma Township Town. Hyo pa Township has five administrative villages and 1,600 residents, who easily communicate with others from Sman shod, though their separate dialects have a few distinctive characteristics.

Mda' ma and Phu ma residents consider Hyo pa people to be 'real' Sman shod people. Hyo pa residents rarely visit Mda' ma and Phu ma townships, but do visit doctors at the Rdzong sar Monastery Tibetan Hospital and also attend rituals held at Rdzong sar Monastery.

Ninety minutes by car south from Gad dmar khug Market along the Sman shod Valley leads to an intersection where one road goes west to Sde dge County Town and another east to Dpal yul County Town. A further half hour along the Sman chu River to Sde dge County Town is the confluence of the Sman chu and 'Bri chu (Yangzi River). Sde dge County Town is a two-hour drive from this point. Sde dge County Town has a few Han and around ten Muslim

residents who sell clothing and food, and also operate restaurants. There are also some Han Chinese government workers. Approximately seventy percent of the population is Tibetan. Across the 'Bri chu west of Sde dge, is 'Jams mda' County of the Tibet Autonomous Region. East of Sde dge is Dkar mdzes County, and to the southeast is Dpal yul County.

Around 500 kilometers southeast of Sde dge County are Nyag rong and Rta'u counties where certain residents speak dialects that Sman shod people do not understand. Nyag rong people speak Nyag rong log skad and Rta'u residents speak Rta'u log skad. 'Log skad' literally means 'inverted speech'. Sman shod people nonetheless consider such people Tibetans. Some Nyag rong and Rta'u log skad speakers study artisanal skills in Sman shod.

Population and Cash Income

Sman shod's 12,000 residents live in around 2,000 households. The vast majority of residents are Tibetan; a few are Han Chinese merchants. Approximately eighty-seven percent of villagers are agro-pastoralists, ten percent are farmers, and three percent are full-time pastoralists.

Villagers depend primarily on agriculture and herding for their livelihood. Pastoralists herd yaks, sheep, goats, and cows. Each herding family has around seventy yaks and one hundred sheep and goats. Each farm also has around eight yaks and twelve cows. Farmers cultivate wheat, barley, cabbage, radish, and potatoes. Grain crops are harvested once a year. Pastoral and agriculture produce are not sold but consumed by the household. Locals also dig caterpillar fungus and undertake migrant labor for income.

Sman shod is famous for its artisans who produce *thang kha*, sculpt clay images, draw, carve wood, smith gold and silver, cast bronze statues, make earthenware pottery, make clothes, spin and weave, make various items from wood, and forge. They sell their handicrafts in the local area and nearby Tibetan areas of Dkar mdzes Prefecture.

Tibetans who have retained the greatest store of local traditional culture and knowledge were born before

1950. To preserve knowledge of local culture, Blo gros phun 'tshog established G.yu thog yon tan mgon pos man bcos gter gnas 'Yuthok Yondengonpo Medical Association (YYMA) to train locals in traditional craftsmanship and to teach the five traditional Buddhist sciences.

History

The following information was provided by Blo gros phun 'tshog:

Around 1,000 A.D, the Sman shod area was in Gling, King Ge sar's⁷ territory. In 1446, the thirty-fifth patriarch of the Sde dge Clan, Phu ta bkra shis seng ge, betrothed his daughter to the head of Gling, who gave the land by the Zi chu River⁸ to Phu ta bkra shis seng ge. Thus the land around the Zi chu River became Phu ta bkra shis seng ge's territory.

Phu ta bkra shis seng ge then made the present Sde dge County Town his capital and established Dge chen Monastery,⁹ becoming the first king of Sde dge. In 1640, the forty-first generation descendant of the Sde dge Clan, the seventh King of Sde dge, Lha chen byams pa phun tshogs, capitalized on a time of weakness when the people of Gling were divided by the separation of religious and secular governance, invaded Gling, and took control of its eighteen counties. Afterwards Sman shod was incorporated into the territory of the Sde dge King and gradually those eighteen counties became the modern Sde dge County. In 1950, the Sde dge Kingdom came to an end as the system of '*dur skor*'¹⁰ 'hereditary headmen'

⁷ A Tibetan hero and king, immortalized in what is often described as the world's longest oral epic.

⁸ The Zi chu is the main river flowing through Sde dge county town.

⁹ Dge chen Monastery is located in Dge chen Township, Sde dge County and was the main monastery of the Sde dge kingdom.

¹⁰ Below the king were the *skar blon* 'ministers', below whom were the '*dul skor* 'hereditary headmen'. A fourth tier

collapsed. 'Jam dbyangs pha mu was the last king of Sde dge. From the first king to the twenty-third, the Sde dge kingdom lasted more than 300 years. The political system of the Sde dge Clan was combined with religious rule to govern the people. In total, there were forty-two hereditary headmen in Sde dge; seven were from Sman shod Valley,¹¹ explaining why Sman shod Valley is known as Sman shod dpon lung nang 'Sman shod, Valley of Leaders'.

Dben zen provided the following narrative about Sman shod history.

Long ago, when no one lived in the Sman shod area, there was a man named Dge rab shed po can from the Kingdom of Gling. He came to Sman shod carrying food on his back and leading a *mdzo*¹² loaded with scriptures. He decided Sman shod was a great place to live and built a house that he named Mkhar dge. Time passed and more people came and settled in Sman shod.

Because Sman shod belonged to the Sde dge Kingdom, the Sman shod people paid taxes to the Sde dge king. Then, the Sde dge Kingdom needed to pay taxes to the Mongol King. Locals paid a milk tax in summer, a barley tax in fall, and a tax of *gro ma*¹³ in spring.

Every summer, the Mongol King came to Sde dge to collect taxes. A member of each community took their taxes to the Mongol King for the Sde dge King; each such person needed twenty-five yaks. They loaded the tax on their twenty-five yaks every morning during the days they traveled. Dge rab shed po can went with fifty yaks, and did all the work of the Sman shod people. Even though he took fifty yaks he was still quicker than the other men who had twenty-five yaks.

consisted of *ho 'dra* 'township leaders' and a fifth tier consisted of *bde dpon* 'village leaders'.

¹¹ Sman shod's seven hereditary headmen families are Phur ma, Bye tham, Gnas ra, 'Gyur chen, 'Gyur chung, Zhing mo, and Gshes nyes.

¹² A yak-cow hybrid.

¹³ *Gro ma* is a root that grows on the Tibetan Plateau. It is collected in spring and fall and is eaten throughout the year.

Every time they rested, he took the saddles and the baggage from the yaks, put them together, and made tea for himself. His tea was already boiling before the others finished unloading their yaks. The others were still loading their yaks the next day by the time he started off.

Dge rab shed po can wore very simple clothes – silk trousers and a sheepskin robe. He could eat a bag of barley flour and a leg of yak meat, and drink a barrel of tea at every meal.

While waiting for his taxes one year, the Mongol King saw people running behind their yaks in the lower valley. The king noticed that Dge rab shed po can was so big that he resembled a man running after black sheep. He asked the Sde dge King, who was sitting beside him, "Who is that man?"

The Sde dge King replied, "He is Dge rab shed po can."

The Mongol King said, "Such a big man! What does he look like?"

The Sde dge King said, "He is a big, strong man, but he is ugly. He brings fifty yaks while the other men only bring twenty-five each." They watched him and noticed that, while the others were busy with their yaks, he had already finished unloading, driven his yaks out to pasture, and had begun making tea.

The Mongol King asked again, "What does that man look like?"

The Sde dge King replied again, "He is a very big, strong man, but he is ugly."

The Mongol King said, "Bring him to meet me tomorrow. Let me see that big man for myself."

The Sde dge King said, "He is too ugly to appear before you."

The Mongol King replied, "No, I want to see this man. I think he is uncommon. Just bring him to me tomorrow, and let me see him."

That night, the Sde dge King met Dge rab shed po can and told him that he needed to meet the Mongol King. He explained that he had told the Mongol King that Dge rab shed po can could eat a bag of barley flour and a leg of yak meat and drink a barrel of tea at each meal.

The next day the Mongol King sat on his golden throne

while Dge rab shed po can sat on a rug in front of him. Dge rab shed po can looked at the Mongol King showing the whites of his eyes, saying nothing.¹⁴ One bag of barley flour, one barrel of tea, and one leg of yak meat were put in front of Dge rab shed po can and he ate it all. He then broke the bone of the yak leg between two fingers, his dug out the marrow with his knife, and ate it. When he finished, he sat there looking hungry. The Sde dge King excused him. All the people were shocked by Dge rab shed po can; they had never before seen such a big, strong man.

The Mongol King had collected five years' taxes in seven days and was starting to plan how much tax he should collect over the next five years. After the calculations were finished, the Mongol King announced that there would be a horse race, and the winning tribe would not pay taxes for five years. Whichever tribe got second place did not need to pay for three years while the others would need to pay the same tax as before.

Sde dge lacked very good horses so they thought they would have to pay taxes to the Mongol King. They were even afraid to think about winning. The Sde dge King held a meeting about whom they should send to race. Dge rab shed po can asked the Sde dge King to ask the Mongol King if he could run against the horses. He was sure he could win.

The Sde dge king informed the Mongol King that they lacked good horses and asked if they could enter Dge rab shed po can to run in the horse race. The Mongol King agreed, believing it impossible for a man to run faster than horses.

The next day everyone prepared for the horse race. They stood in a line at the foot of a mountain, and the officials waited for them atop a mountain.

Dge rab shed po can took a pot, a bag of barley flour, a bowl, a yak leg, and some yak dung in a goatskin bag. He rolled up his pants to the knee. When the referee said, "One, two, three, go!" Dge rab shed po can began running with the horses. As he ran, he opened the goatskin bag and took out the pot, scooped water from the river, and carried it to the mountaintop in one hand.

¹⁴ Showing the whites of one's eyes is a sign of disapproval.

He made a stove out of three stones, lit the yak dung he had brought, and started making tea for himself. The other opponents arrived at the mountaintop after he had drunk the tea, and eaten one bag of barley flour and a leg of yak meat. Dge rab shed po can was declared the winner.

After that competition the Sde dge Kingdom paid no taxes to the Mongol King for the next five years.

Later, the Mongol King had a problem. He had no sons, only two daughters, thus no one would inherit his kingdom. He ordered the Sde dge King to give Dge rab shed po can to him as his son-in-law.

The king and people of Sde dge told the Mongol King that they could not give Dge rab shed po can to him, even if it meant they would have to pay taxes again. However, after much discussion, they decided to send Dge rab shed po can to the Mongol King for just three years. They agreed that, if the princesses gave birth to girls they would belong to Sde dge, but if they had boys they would belong to the Mongol King.

Dge rab shed po can went to the Mongol Kingdom and married the princesses; each soon gave birth to one daughter.

During the three years, all the monks in Sde dge's twenty-five monasteries chanted to prevent the Mongol princesses from giving birth to sons. They did this because they didn't want any Tibetans to live with Mongols.¹⁵ Then Dge rab shed po can took the two babies and returned to Sde dge.

After returning to Sde dge, he built two homes for his daughters: Dge rab phun ma tshang lived in the upper part of the Sman shod Valley, and Dge rab sog mo tshang lived in the lower part of the valley (Figures 16 and 17). Those two families then became the first leaders in Sman shod, and all locals are considered to be their descendants.

After many years, the Nyag rong people invaded Sman shod, killed all the villagers older than six, and burned most of the buildings and part of the monastery. Old buildings and things made by Dge rab shed po can can no longer be seen.

Some people in Sman shod believe this story is true and

¹⁵ Since ethnicity is locally reckoned patrilineally, the offspring of a Tibetan man and a Mongol woman would have been considered Tibetan.

think most people in Sman shod are descendants of the Mongol princesses and Dge rab shed po can. However, most people in Sman shod think they are the descendants of the subjects of the Kingdom of Gling and the descendants of King Ge sar. Such people think Dge rab shed po can was just a character made up by a clever man. Nonetheless, locals all believe that the Sde dge Kingdom once paid taxes to the Mongol Kingdom.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Figure 9.

Sman shod snow mountains at dawn. February 2010.

Figure 10.

Lower DzaM mda' Village by the Sman chu, looking down from the summer pasture. August 2010.

Figure 11.

Lower DzaM mda' Village by the Sman chu, looking down from the summer pasture. February 2010.

Figure 12.

Bronze statue in Lower DzaM mda' Villages. August 2010.

Figure 13.

Ci jo and Rtsis thog villages seen from Ci jo Village. August 2010.

Figure 14.

A view southeast over Sman shod Valley from Rdzong sar Monastery. The Sman chu River resembles a bow pointing to the left side of the frame. The path crossing the river resembles an arrow. The monks' quarters, Rdzong sar bshad grwa, are located on the arrowhead, which is a geomantically appropriate place for the pursuit of wisdom. February 2010.

Figure 15.

Ri kha and Rtse dung villages as viewed from Rdzong sar Tibetan Hospital. October 2009.

Figure 16.

Dge rab shed po can's family house collapsed in 2007. Some consider this the first castle in the Sman shod area. February 2010.

Figure 17.

Inside Dge rab shed po can's family's house. The family left in about 1960, and then the Byo lu tshang family lived there for about thirty-five years. February 2010.

Figure 18.

Villagers collect herbal medicines and mushrooms in summer from nearby mountains and forests and dry them on roofs and balconies. August 2010.

Figure 19.

Villagers collect mushrooms from forests nearby Cijo Village in August and September. August 2010.

Figure 20.

Villagers collect mushrooms from the forests and dry them on house roofs and balconies. August 2010.

Figure 21.

After drying in the sun for between two weeks and three months, mushrooms are threaded on string and hung on balcony walls. They are eaten in winter. August 2010.

Figure 22.

Villagers collect herbs, dry them on their roofs and balconies, and then sell them or exchange them for medicine at the local Tibetan hospital. August 2010.





























PART TWO: SMAN SHOD FOLK MUSIC

La yug

La yug, 'love songs', are traditionally sung antiphonally between two people who may be the same or different gender, mostly when herding, but also at parties and when people are on mountains digging caterpillar fungus.¹⁶

La yug are usually sung competitively in *la rtsod* 'la yug competitions', during which two people sing while others sit silently and listen. When someone sings a *la yug*, their opponent must reply quickly with appropriate improvised lyrics, and may not repeat themselves during the competition.

Two *la yug* melodies are used in Sman shod. One is sometimes called *mgur* 'song', is high pitched, and has a wide dynamic range. The other, unnamed melody is comparatively lower in pitch and has a more regular rhythm than *mgur*. *La yug* can be sung to either melody, but *mgur* is typically used when singing on mountains when herding or otherwise engaged, while the other melody is preferred during antiphonal singing competitions. Lyrics should differ but the melody remains constant throughout a singing competition.

Singers begin with preparatory songs, the first of which is *glu mgo* 'the head of the song' and is sung antiphonally. The lyrics of the first song are (Bo nyed):

¹ ལྷ་མགོ་(གོ)ཤ་ར་དཀར་མུང་འདི།

² ར་ཡན་ལག་(གོ)འཛོམས་པའི་ལྷ་ཞིག་ལེན།

³ ལྷ་སྒྲིང་(གོ)ཟུ་ཉིག་ཐང་བ་འདི།

⁴ ཐང་རྒྱན་ཆ་(གོ)འཛོམས་པའི་ལྷ་ཞིག་ལེན།

⁵ ལྷ་མཐའ་(གོ)སྒོ་ར་དེའུ་འདི།

⁶ སྒོ་ར་བཞི་(གོ)འཛོམས་པའི་ལྷ་ཞིག་ལེན།

¹The song's head, *go*,¹⁷ is the white deer antler,

²Sing a song, *go*, like a set of antlers.

¹⁶ In many Tibetan areas, antiphonal courtship songs are not performed in the presence of close relatives. This taboo does not apply in Sman shod.

¹⁷ *Go* is a vocable with no identifiable lexical meaning.

- ³The song's middle, *go*, is a string of pearls,
⁴Sing a song, *go*, like a full string of pearls.
⁵The song's end, *go*, is the last gate,
⁶Sing a song, *go*, like a complete gate.

The second preparation song is the *glu gdan* 'rug song' (Bo nyed):

- ¹སྟག་གདན་(གོ)གཟིག་གདན་གདན་ཞིག་འདིང་།
²སྟག་རི་མོ་(གོ)ཅན་གྱི་གདན་དང་གཅིག་།
³གཟིག་ཐིག་ལེ་(གོ)ཅན་གྱི་གདན་དང་གཉིས་།
⁴གུང་ཨ་ལོང་(གོ)ཅན་གྱི་གདན་དང་གསུམ་།

- ¹I will put out the tiger skin rug, *go*, and the leopard skin rug.
²The striped tiger skin rug, *go*, is first.
³The spotted leopard skin rug, *go*, is second.
⁴The spotted *gung*¹⁸ skin rug, *go*, is third.

- ¹གདན་དེ་གསུམ་(གོ)སྟོང་ལ་དཔོན་གསུམ་བཞུགས་།
²ད་རྟོད་ཀྱི་(གོ)ཀླུ་གར་རྒྱལ་པོ་བཞུགས་།
³ད་ཐང་ཀྱི་(གོ)ཀླུ་ནག་རྒྱལ་པོ་བཞུགས་།
⁴ད་བར་ཀྱི་(གོ)ཐེང་གེ་རྒྱལ་པོ་བཞུགས་།

- ¹Three leaders are seated on, *go*, these three mats, respectively.
²Now the Indian King, *go*, from the upper realm sits.
³Now the Chinese King, *go*, from the lower realm sits.
⁴Now the Sde dge King, *go*, from the middle realm sits.

- ¹དཔོན་དེ་གསུམ་(གོ)སྟོན་ལ་ཤ་གསུམ་བྲངས་།
²ད་རྩ་རྟོད་(གོ)འབྲོང་ཤ་ཟེ་མ་དང་།
³ད་འབྲི་རྒྱུད་(གོ)གཡག་དཀར་ཐུལ་ལེ་ཤ།
⁴ད་ལུག་གི་(གོ)ལུག་ཤ་དཀར་རྒྱུད་གསུམ་།

¹⁸ This spotted animal resembled a fox but was somewhat larger. It was white with black spots and lived in mountain forests. Locals believe it to be extinct.

¹The three leaders, *go*, shall be served the three types of meat.

²Tender, wild yak meat, *go*, from upper rocky mountains.

³White *thul le*,¹⁹ *go*, meat.

⁴And white lamb flesh, *go*, make three.

¹ཤ་དེ་གསུམ་(གོ)ཐོན་ལ་གྱི་གསུམ་བཞག།

²གྱི་ཡར་(གོ)བྱི་མ་བྱི་མགུ་བྱི་གསུམ།

³ལས་བསྐལ་བ་(གོ)འཇགས་པའི་མགུ་བྱི་ཡིན།

¹Three knives, *go*, shall be brought for the three types of meat.

²The three knives are *yar zi*, *go*, *ma zi*, and *mgu zi*.²⁰

³They are the knives, *go*, of a peaceful age.

The third preparation song is the *glu mchod* 'offering song' (Bo nyed):

¹འབྲི་མེར་ཁམ་(གོ)ཟུ་ག་ནག་པོ་ཅན།

²མར་བཞོ་རྩུ་(གོ)འོ་མ་དཀར་པོ་ཡིན།

³མེར་འབྲིལ་རྩུ་(གོ)འབྲི་མར་མེར་པོ་རེད།

⁴མེར་འབྲིལ་ཚད་(གོ)དཀོན་མཆོག་མཆོད་པ་འབུལ།

¹The brownish '*bri*,²¹ *go*, with black fur.

²Produces, *go*, white milk, and

³Yellow, *go*, '*bri* butter.

⁴Offer all these dairy products, *go*, to the Three Jewels.²²

¹⁹ *Thul le* is an alternative name for *thul ma*, a female yak that has given birth for the first time.

²⁰ The *ya zi*, *ma zi*, and *mgu zi* are the three knives given by the Chinese Emperor to his three nephews of the Gling Kingdom. In the Ge sar epic the Chinese Emperor gave three of his princesses to three Gling officials as wives, and each had a son.

²¹ Female yak.

²² *Dkon mchog gsum* 'the Three Jewels', are the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

After the three preparation songs, ordinary *la yug* songs are sung. *La yug* singers usually start the *la yug* with polite lyrics and end with insulting lyrics. For example, a polite lyric might be (Bo nyed):

¹ ཁྱོད་ཡོད་ས་(གོ)ཤར་ཡུལ་ཤར་སྟོད་རེད།

² ང་ཡོད་ས་(གོ)ཤར་ཡུལ་ཤར་སྟོད་རེད།

³ ཤར་སྟོད་སྟོད་(གོ)ཕྱིད་དུ་མ་བསམ་དགོ།

⁴ སེམས་བསམ་བ་ཤྲུག་ཐུབ་པས་བསྐྱེད་སྟེ།

¹ You are in, *go*, the upper eastern realm.

² I am in, *go*, the lower eastern realm.

³ Do not think we are parted, *go*, in the lower and upper realm.

⁴ Because our hearts are both, *go*, held by the Buddha.

When people insult each other while singing *la yug* they may sing such lyrics as (Bo nyed):

¹ སྤྱིན་དཀར་དཀར་(གོ)བལ་གཅིག་ཡིན་ན་གོ།

² རོགས་ཁྱོད་ལ་(གོ)གོས་གཅིག་ལོས་འབྲུབ་གོ།

³ རྒྱ་གཙང་ཆབ་(གོ)ཆང་གཅིག་ཡིན་ན་གོ།

⁴ རོགས་ཁྱོད་ལ་(གོ)ཆང་གཅིག་ལོས་འདྲེན་གོ།

¹ If clouds, *go*, were wool,

² I would certainly make, *go*, some clothing for you, my lover.

³ If rivers, *go*, were liquor,

⁴ I would certainly serve, *go*, a bowl of liquor to you, my lover.

Of course every cloud is not wool, nor is every river liquor, thus the lyrics mean the singer is not going to make cloth or pour liquor for their opponent. This indicates the singer dislikes their opponent.

One cannot simply reply with any improvised lyrics during *la rtsod*; the opponent must reply with lyrics that are directly related to what was previously sung. Also, they may not repeat any lyrics. For the insult above, the opponent

might reply (Bo nyed):

¹ཁྱོད་མེ་རྟག་(གོ)སེར་ཆེན་ཡིན་ན་གོ།

²གཙང་ཡར་ལུང་(གོ)ཁོག་ལ་འཁུངས་ཤོག་གོ།

³ང་འབྲུ་དང་(གོ)སྦྱང་མ་སྦྱལ་པར་བརྟེན།

⁴ངས་ཉིན་རེར་(གོ)ལན་རེར་བསྐྱོར་འོང་གོ།

¹If you, *go*, were a buttercup,

²You would sprout, *go*, upstream.

³I would transform myself, *go*, into an insect or bee,

⁴And visit you, *go*, once a day.

This metaphor suggests that like a buttercup sprouting in a valley, people of quality also assume high positions and attract others, like buttercups attract bees. The singer suggests with this analogy that their opponent is neither of high quality nor attractive.

These examples, however, are not considered very insulting. An example of a truly insulting *la yug* lyric is (Bo nyed):

¹རི་བོང་(གོ)བགས་པའི་ལྷ་གཅིག་བསྐྱབ།

²བྱི་མཇེ་(གོ)དམར་པོས་རྟག་གཅིག་བཙུགས།

³སྐྱོན་ས་(གོ)མ་རྟེན་ལོ་གསུམ་ལུས།

⁴དུས་ད་ལྟ་(གོ)སྦྱ་བ་བྱོད་ལ་སྐྱོན།

¹I used rabbit skin, *go*, to make a hat,

²And inserted, *go*, a dog's red penis in its top.

³Before I could not find any one, *go*, to put the hat on.

⁴But now, *go*, I will put it on you, the singer.

¹སེ་རང་(གོ)བྱ་མོ་སེར་སྐྱེམ་མ།

²ཐར་ འོ་ཡོས་(གོ)རིག་དུས་སྒོ་ཡིད་འཁུགས།

³ཞོ་འོ་མ་(གོ)རིག་དུས་ཞེན་ཁ་ལོག།

⁴ཆུ་ཆེ་ལེ་(གོ)རིག་དུས་ཡི་ཁྱུང་ཁྱུང་།

¹The pale-faced, skinny girl, *go*, from Se rang,

²Seeing grain, *go*, feels dizzy.

³Seeing yogurt and milk, *go*, feels nauseous,

⁴But seeing water and gruel, *go*, feels hungry.

When people sing insulting or lewd *la yug*, a special *la yug* song is thought to protect the singer from insults. This song is called a *mthu bkag* 'curse blocker'. The lyrics of a *mthu bkag la yug* may be, for instance (Bo nyed):

¹གནམ་མཐོན་(གོ)སྤྱོད་དཀར་གཞལ་ཡས་ཁང་།།

²དེའི་ནང་ལ་(གོ)ཉི་ཟླ་སྐར་གསུམ་འཛོམས།།

³འབྲུག་པོ་རྒྱུང་(གོ)སེམས་པ་ངེ་སྦྱིད་ཤོག།

⁴ཆར་ཟམ་ཟེམ་(གོ)རྒྱུན་ཆད་མེད་པར་ཤོག།

⁵དགོན་ཁ་རྒྱུང་(གོ)གསེར་གྱི་པ་ཏྲ་ཅན།།

⁶དེའི་ནང་ལ་(གོ)སྤྱོད་དཀར་གསུམ་འཛོམས་ཤོག།

⁷གྲ་མང་པོ་(གོ)སེམས་པ་ངེ་སྦྱིད་ཤོག།

⁸ཆོས་བཀའ་འབྲུར་(གོ)རྒྱུན་ཆད་མེད་པར་ཤོག།

⁹སྤྱི་རི་ལུང་(གོ)གསེར་གྱི་ཀ་ར་ཅན།།

¹⁰དེའི་ནང་ལ་(གོ)པ་ཁུ་མ་འཛོམས་ཤོག།

¹¹མ་སྤྱོད་མོ་(གོ)སེམས་པ་ངེ་སྦྱིད་ཤོག།

¹²ཀ་ཡི་གེ་(གོ)རྒྱུན་ཆད་མེད་པར་ཤོག།

¹The blue sky, *go*, is the white clouds' celestial palace.

²The sun, moon, and stars, all three, *go*, gather there.

³I hope dragons, *go*, will be increasingly happy.

⁴I hope there will be, *go*, unceasing gentle rains.

⁵In the colorful monastery resembling, *go*, the golden endless knot,²³

⁶I hope that *bla ma* and monks, *go*, will gather.

⁷I hope that monks, *go*, will be increasingly happy,

⁸I hope the Bka' 'gyur,²⁴ *go*, will continuously flourish.

⁹In the golden-pillared tent, *go*, in the valley.

¹⁰I hope fathers, uncles, and mothers, *go*, will gather.

¹¹I hope mothers and sisters-in-law, *go*, will be increasingly

²³ The endless knot is one of the Eight Auspicious Symbols: golden fish, white conch, vase, Dharma wheel, victory banner, umbrella, lotus, and the endless knot.

²⁴ The 108 volumes of the Buddha's teaching.

happy.

¹²I hope education, *go*, will continuously flourish.

There is no concluding song in a *la yug* competition, as with dancing or building songs (see below). The competition typically ends when one singer cannot respond to their opponent. Sometimes, however, the competition continues until the singers agree to stop.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Figure 23.

On 3 March 2010, ten people gathered at Zla ba grab pa's home for a *la yug* competition.

Figure 24.

Krug krug (second from left) sings to his opponents, the women sitting opposite him.

Figure 25.

Nyi ma 'tshor (left) sings to her opponent who sits opposite her.

Figure 26.

Left to right: Lha mo 'tsho, Bde skyid, Skar ma chos 'tsho, and Rin chen lha mo, *la yug* singers.









Mgur mo

Mgur mo are mostly about love and are usually sung by people aged seventeen into their late twenties at picnics and parties. *Mgur mo* are used to tell people's fortune about their lovers. This game is called *mgur mo bzhag* meaning 'to tell fortune with rings'.

People sit in a circle and one person collects a ring from each participant. Those lacking rings may give anything small that belongs to them (Figure 27). They tell everyone who their boyfriend or girlfriend is as they give the rings.

The rings represent their owners. For every ring, players sing twice – once from the boy's side and once from the girl's side. The person who has all the rings chooses one of the rings and holds it in one hand without showing anyone whose ring it is (Figure 30). One participant other than the one holding the rings then sings a *mgur mo* for the ring.

After a participant finishes singing the *mgur mo*, the ring is shown to everyone and its owner revealed (Figure 32). Others then try to interpret what the singer's lyrics indicate about their feelings for the ring's owner.

This process is repeated for each ring. The person who has all the rings does not show the second-last ring until a *mgur mo* has been sung for the final ring.

After they finish singing one *mgur mo* for every ring, the rings are put together again and the process is repeated. This second time, people interpret the two songs sung for one ring to see if they gain new meaning in juxtaposition. The comparison may reveal, for example, a rivalry of two boys over a girl, or a firm friendship between three people. The rings are then returned to their owners (Figure 33).

An individual *mgur mo* takes around twenty seconds to sing. It is tuneful, has a low dynamic range, and is low pitched. The lyrics are short and poetically dense.

Below are some *mgur mo* lyrics (A dkar mtsho):

¹རི་མགོ་མཐོན་པོའི་སྤེང་ལ།
²དར་སྟོག་ཁ་གང་བསྟོན་ཡོད།
³ཁ་ཞིང་རྒྱང་འདུག་མ་བསམ།
⁴བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཏྲགས་བརྒྱད་འཛོམས་ཡོད།

¹Atop the mountain,
²I hung scripture flags.
³Do not worry that they are small,
⁴On them are all Eight Auspicious Symbols.

¹ཕར་བསམ་ཕར་ལ་མ་བསམས།
²ཚུར་བསམ་ལས་ལ་བསྟོན་བྱང་།
³སྦྱིད་ན་སྤྲ་མ་མཁའ་འགོ།
⁴མ་སྦྱིད་རང་རང་སོ་སོ།

¹I never imagined that we would be together,
²But that's the fate we have been given.
³If we are happy, that is because the *bla ma* has blessed us.
⁴If we are unhappy, then let's just go our own ways.

¹རྒྱང་འདྲིས་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཅིད་གོས།
²ང་ལ་འདིད་གོས་གྱིས་ཤོག།
³ལག་གི་གདུབ་བྱ་རེད་ན།
⁴ངས་རང་ཕྱད་དང་ཚོག་བྱང་།

¹Whatever does my lover want?
²Just tell me!
³If it is the bracelet on my wrist,
⁴I can take it off for you.

¹རི་ལ་ར་བ་བརྒྱབ་ཡོད།
²ནང་ལ་སྟན་མ་བཏབ་ཡོད།
³སྟན་མ་ཟ་སེམས་ཡོད་ན།
⁴ར་སྟོ་བྱེ་ནས་ཕེབས་ཤོག།

¹I erected a fence on the mountain,
²And grew peas inside it.
³If you want to eat peas,
⁴Just open the gate and come inside.

¹དཀར་ཡོལ་འབྲུག་རིས་ནང་ལ།
²སང་གའི་འོ་མ་སྒྲགས་ཡོད།
³འོ་མ་ཐུ་ལ་འབྲུར་ན།

⁴སྒྲིབ་ཕྱོག་གི་ལས་རེད།

¹In the bowl decorated with dragons,
²I poured lion's milk.
³If the milk became water,
⁴It was determined by what I did in my former life.

¹ཕྱང་མ་བཅུགས་ཡོད་བཅུགས་ཡོད།

²ཁྱ་གཉིས་བར་ལ་བཅུགས་ཡོད།

³ལས་འབྲས་མེད་པའི་ཕྱང་མ།

⁴ཁྱ་གཉིས་བར་ལ་སྐམ་ཐལ།

¹I planted a willow tree,
²Between two rivers.
³But that inconsequential willow tree,
⁴Dried up, even though it was between two rivers.

¹ཕྱང་མ་བཅུགས་ཡོད་བཅུགས་ཡོད།

²རྩ་རྩེ་བྲག་ལ་བཅུགས་ཡོད།

³ལས་འབྲས་ཡོད་པའི་ཕྱང་མ།

⁴རྩ་རྩེ་བྲག་ལ་སྒྲིལ་བྱུང་།

¹I planted a willow tree,
²On a hillock.
³However that fateful willow tree,
⁴Flourished even though it was on a hillock.

¹ཕ་རི་སྤང་ཁའི་སྤང་ལ།

²ར་མ་ལྷག་གིས་བཀང་བྱུང་།

³སྤང་གི་གཅིག་རྒྱག་གཉིས་རྒྱག།

⁴ར་ལེ་རི་ལེ་བསྐྱེལ་བྱང་།

¹The pastures on the river's far bank,²⁵

²Were filled with sheep and goats.

³But wolves came, one after another,

⁴And the sheep and goats fell one by one.

¹ཁྱིམ་བྱ་བྱ་པོ་དཀར་ཆུང་།

²སྤྱག་སྐད་སྟོན་ལ་མ་གཏོང་།

³ཆུང་འདྲིས་བྱམས་བ་ངེད་གཉིས།

⁴སྟོང་གཏམ་རྒྱུས་ལ་ལྷུས་ཐལ།

¹White cock,

²Please delay crowing.

³My gentle lover and I,

⁴Have not yet finished speaking our hearts.

¹ཕ་རི་རྩོ་རྩེ་བྲག་ལ།

²གནམ་ལྷགས་ཕུར་བ་བརྒྱངས་ཡོད།

³དེ་ལ་ཐོ་ཐུལ་མ་རྒྱག།

⁴རིན་ཆེན་སྟོག་ལ་དག་འོང་།

¹On the hillock on the river's far bank,

²A *rnam lcag phur ba*²⁶ was nailed down.

³If you touch it,

⁴You will lose your life.

¹ཌམ་ཀ་དཀར་པོ་གཅིག་གིས།

²སྟོལ་མའི་སྟུ་གཅིག་བཞེངས་བསམ།

³ལྷ་བཟོ་ཐུགས་སེམས་གཡེང་ནས།

⁴སྤྱན་ལ་ཆེ་ཆུང་ཤོར་ཐལ།

²⁵ *Pha ri* literally means on the far side of a valley.

²⁶ *Rnam lcag* refers to metal found in the ground at the site of a lightning strike. *Phur ba* is a 'ritual dagger'. *Rnam lcag phur ba* thus suggests a ritual dagger made from metal found in the ground at the site of a lightning strike.

¹With a silver coin,

²I went to make a statue of Tara.

³The craftsman was absent-minded,

⁴Thus one of the statue's eyes was big, the other small.

¹ཀྱུ་གར་ཨ་ཙ་ར་ལ།

²བཀའ་གཏམ་ལན་གསུམ་ཁྱེས་ནས།

³སོག་པོའི་ཏ་རུ་ཁ་ལ།

⁴སྒྲིང་གཏམ་མ་བཤད་གསུངས་བྱང།

¹To A sa ra the fortune teller from India,

²I asked three times for a prediction and he said,

³The words from the Mongolian *Da ru*,²⁷

⁴Do not reveal the truth.

²⁷ The *Da ru* is a small drum used in religious rituals. The term indicates a two-faced person.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Figure 27.

On 4 March 2010, ten people gathered at Zla ba grab pa's home and participated in a *mgur mo* game. "If you do not have any rings just give me something small as a substitute," says Zla ba grab pa (left). Zla ba grab pa's grandmother (middle) looks on.

Figure 28.

'Phrin las chos mtsho (second from left) gives Zla ba grab pa her ring (right). People sit wherever they like.

Figure 29.

Zla ba grab pa says, "These are the all the rings and papers from each participant."

Figure 30.

Zla ba grab pa says, "Please sing a *mgur mo* for this ring. I won't reveal the ring's owner until the song finishes."

Figure 31.

Rka ma chos 'dzin (right) sings, "On the hillock on the river's far bank, A *rnam lcag phur par* was nailed down. If you touch it, you will lose your life."

Figure 32.

Zla ba grab pa (whose hand is visible at the right of the picture) asks, "Whose ring is this? From the *mgur mo*, it seems he really loves you."

Figure 33.

Zla ba grab pa (right) exclaims to Lha mo, "Wow! You and he have great potential! I guess you two will love each other forever!" Lha mo, (the ring's owner in the center) hides her face in embarrassment.















Ma Ni song

Ma Ni are traditionally sung on pilgrimages to holy places, while herding livestock on mountains, and when holding a Smyung gnas 'fasting ritual' (Figure 34). On pilgrimage, *ma Ni* songs are sung while climbing sacred mountains and circumambulating *ma Ni* piles. Every township and village holds a Ma Ni dung sgrub 'recitation of one billion *Ma Ni*' rituals every year in winter, when villagers have the most free time (Figures 35 to 41). Those who fast may not speak or eat for two days, sit on a chair higher than thirty centimeters, nor laugh. They may sing *ma Ni* songs. Fasting rituals are usually held for sixteen days in winter, around Lo sar²⁸ time; they do not have a certain date. *Ma Ni* songs may also be sung as entertainment while herding. There are many different *ma Ni* songs in Sman shod. Most employ the six-syllable mantra, oM ma Ni pad+me hUM, as lyrics. In general, *ma Ni* songs have loud volume, a wide dynamic range, are high-pitched, tuneful, and have irregular rhythms. The biggest difference between the various *ma Ni* songs is the melody. Two *ma Ni* songs have long lyrics. Here are the lyrics of one song (Bo nyed):

¹ བོད་ཁ་བ་ཅན་གྱི་ཡུལ་ཁམས་འདིའི།

² མགོན་གཅིག་ཕུ་སྐྱན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་ཡིན།

¹ On the snow land of Tibet,

² Avalokitesvara, the sole savior.

ཨྲི་མཆི་པརྟེ་ལྷོ།

ཨྲི་མཆི་པརྟེ་ལྷོ།

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

³ དེ་ཡིད་ལ་བྱན་པའི་སྐད་ཅིག་ལ།

⁴ སྒྲིང་རུས་པའི་གཏིང་ནས་འོ་དོད་འབོད།

²⁸ Lo sar refers to the Tibetan New Year period.

³As soon I recall him,

⁴I cry for help from the depths of my heart.²⁹

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པདྨེ་ཧཱུྃ།

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པདྨེ་ཧཱུྃ།

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

⁵ཆོ་འདི་དང་ཕྱི་མ་བར་དོ་གསུམ།

⁶སྐབས་གཞན་ན་མེད་དོ་སྐབས་རས་གཟིགས།

⁵In this life, the next life, and in *bar do*,³⁰

⁶Only Avalokitishvara is our savior.

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པདྨེ་ཧཱུྃ།

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པདྨེ་ཧཱུྃ།

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

⁷དངོས་མཇལ་བའི་མཚན་ལྡན་སྤྲུལ་མ་འདི།

⁸རྗེ་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་དང་དབྱེར་མེད་ཡིན།

⁷The perfect *bla ma* that I met in reality,

⁸Is no different from all the Buddhas.

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པདྨེ་ཧཱུྃ།

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པདྨེ་ཧཱུྃ།

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

⁹བཀའ་ལྷུང་གི་ཚས་འབྲེལ་གནང་བ་འདི།

¹⁰དོན་ཐར་པའི་ས་བོན་བཞག་པ་ཡིན།

⁹The religious teaching once performed,

¹⁰Plants the seed of liberation.

²⁹ Literally 'heart and bone'.

³⁰ The forty-nine days after death and before rebirth.

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པ་རྟེ་ལྷོ།
ཨོཾ་མཆི་པ་རྟེ་ལྷོ།

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM
oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

¹¹ ཐབས་ཤེས་ཀྱི་བདུད་ཅི་སྤྱན་པ་འདི།

¹² བྱེན་ཐབས་དང་དངོས་གྲུབ་ཀྱི་རྣམ་མཆོག་ཡིན།

¹¹ The nectar of means and wisdom bestowed,

¹² Are excellent substances for spiritual blessing and attainment.

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པ་རྟེ་ལྷོ།
ཨོཾ་མཆི་པ་རྟེ་ལྷོ།

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM
oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

¹³ ཆོས་རྩི་རྩེ་ཐེག་པ་ཟབ་ཁྱད་ཆེ།

¹⁴ མགོན་ཅི་བརྒྱད་ཐེ་མ་ཐུགས་རྩེ་ཆེ།

¹³ The Vajrayana³¹ is profound,

¹⁴ Thanks to the root and lineage gurus.

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པ་རྟེ་ལྷོ།
ཨོཾ་མཆི་པ་རྟེ་ལྷོ།

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM
oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

¹⁵ མ་རིག་འཛིན་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཆོག་གས་གྲུ།

¹⁶ དུས་ནམ་ཡང་འཛོམས་པའི་སྒྲོན་ལམ་འདེབས།

¹⁵ Vidyadhara and dakini,

¹⁶ May they gather repeatedly forever.

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པ་རྟེ་ལྷོ།

³¹ Vajrayana refers to the teaching and practices of Mahayana Buddhism.

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པདྨེ་ཧཱུྃ།

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

¹⁷ཐྱུག་སངས་རྒྱལ་བལྟན་པ་དར་བར་ཤོག།

¹⁸མ་འགྲོ་བྱུག་སེམས་ཅན་བདེ་བར་ཤོག།

¹⁷May Buddhism flourish.

¹⁸May the six classes of sentient beings live happily.³²

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པདྨེ་ཧཱུྃ།

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པདྨེ་ཧཱུྃ།

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

¹⁹སྦོས་འདིར་འདུས་དད་ལྡན་པོ་མོ་རྣམས།

²⁰མ་ལུས་པར་དྲོ་རྩེ་འཆང་འཕྱོང་ཤོག།

¹⁹The devout males and females present here,

²⁰Shall all be Vajradhara.

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པདྨེ་ཧཱུྃ།

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པདྨེ་ཧཱུྃ།

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

²¹དུས་སྐྱུགས་མའི་རང་མདངས་དབྱིངས་སུ་ཞི།

²²དཔལ་ལྗོན་གས་ལྡན་གསར་དུ་ཆོས་པར་ཤོག།

²¹When I of this degenerate age pass into the expanse,

²²May another happy life come again.

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པདྨེ་ཧཱུྃ།

ཨོཾ་མཆི་པདྨེ་ཧཱུྃ།

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM

³² The six classes of sentient beings are humans, deities, hungry ghosts, animals, hell-beings, and demi-gods.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Figure 34.

Ma Ni are sung during Smyung gnas. Participants sing *ma Ni* while circumambulating *ma Ni* stones and the stupa near the Smyung gnas lha khang, the temple where Smyung gnas rituals are held. February 2010.

Figure 35.

A chanting yard surrounds the Phu ma Township *ma Ni* hall. Every Lo sar, about 1,000 Phu ma Township residents gather for the Ma Ni dung sgrub 'recitation of one billion *Ma Ni*' for four to five days. February 2010.

Figure 36.

Bsams 'grub, a local *bla ma*, leads villagers as they sing and chant *ma Ni*. He chants a passage, and villagers repeat it during the Ma Ni dung sgrub ritual. February 2010.

Figure 37.

A *bla ma* gives Buddhist teachings and guides villagers as they sing *ma Ni* songs. February 2010.

Figure 38.

An old man from Mda' ma Township spins a prayer wheel and sings *ma Ni* in Phu ma Township's Ma Ni dung sgrub. Attending one Ma Ni dung sgrub ritual generates the same merit as repeating one billion *ma Ni*, though only 10,000-30,000 *ma Ni* may actually be chanted per day. Photograph by 'Phrin las phun tshogs. February 2010.

Figure 39.

Chos 'tshor spins a '*khor lo 'ma Ni* wheel' containing scriptures. Parents teach children to chant such scriptures as the Six Sacred Syllables, oM ma Ni pad+me hUM, when they begin speaking. February 2010.

Figure 40.

A villager makes black tea for chanting villagers. Approximately 1,000 people attended. February 2010.

Figure 41.

A mother offers food to her child during a break from chanting *ma Ni*. February 2010.

















Dancing Songs

Sman shod dances are called Sde dge mdul bro 'the Sde dge hereditary dance'. The dance's origin relates to the Sde dge King holding a festival and asking all forty-two hereditary leaders to prepare this dance. The headmen sent their best, most beautiful-voiced dancers to perform for the Sde dge King. Of the forty-two hereditary headman, seven were from the Sman shod area, consequently, Sman shod residents are considered best at dancing Sde dge mdul bro. The dance is also called Sde dge bro chen 'the great dance of Sde dge' and has been famous in Khams since the 1980s, when villagers went to Dar mdo, the capital of Dkar mdzes Prefecture, to dance on National Day. *Bro mchod* 'offering dance', *'dzom bro* 'gathering dance', *gzhung bro* 'middle dance', and *bkra shis* 'closing dance' are the four parts of the dance.

Participants sing unaccompanied while dancing in a circle. These high-pitched, tuneful songs have irregular rhythms. The audience usually cannot hear the lyrics because the dancers do not sing the lyrics clearly in fear the audience will steal them. Every village has unique dance song lyrics though the melodies and dance movements differ. Men move in long steps while women's strides are shorter and their movements more subdued; they also slightly lower their heads. Men or women may sometimes make patterns resembling a yin-yang symbol while dancing the 'middle dance'.

The dancers are divided by gender, and then each unisex group is divided in two. Each of the four groups has one *bro dpon* 'dance leader'. In one circle dance, there are two female dance leaders, each leading one group. Female and male dancers take turns dancing and men usually dance first and last.

A dance segment is about ninety minutes long. Men dance while women rest, and vice versa. While the men perform, the women dress, eat, and discuss what to dance next. The men do the same when the women perform, and then the men dance again. Dances are held during Lo sar, during summer festivals, to welcome a famous monk or incarnate *bla ma*, and at summer picnics. There are no

precise days for dancing. The following account describes the dances that occurred during Lo sar 2010.

Today is 20 February 2010, the sixth day of the first Tibetan lunar month. We are going to see the famous Sde dge bro chen in Sman shed. A dance will be held at the Bkra shis lha rtse in DzaM mda' Village, in the upper part of Sman shod Valley. People wear their best clothes. Some are on motorcycles, some ride horses, and others walk. We are all going to the same place.

The weather is cold. Everyone wears sheep skin robes or robes of imitation sheepskin. Women have plaited their hair into twelve to eighteen long, thin braids, from which are hung one or two strings of turquoise and coral beads. Their hair and heads are richly ornamented with coral, turquoise, and amber (Figure 49).

Many people gather around five big tents on the dancing ground for dancers and village leaders. The male dancers are in a big circle, ready to dance. In another tent, the two female dance leaders discuss which dance they will do and divide the women dancers into groups. The men's headbands and trousers are distinctive. The *mgo kris* 'headband' is a red scarf with many colorful, diversiform diamond shapes on each end. Men wear an earring in their left ear and two Tibetan raw-silk shirts. They wear *phrug*³³ and might wear one inner *phrug* and one outer *phrug* (Figure 42). They wear a meter-long broadsword and *par khug*.³⁴ Sometimes they also put needle and thread in front of a *me cha*,³⁵ tied to the end of a *blo bzung*,³⁶ worn on the left side connected by two or three sliver

³³ Robe made of wool from the neck of sheep, which is considered the best wool. People weave the cloth before making a robe. Locals say one robe of *phrug* is equal to one pearl in value.

³⁴ A pouch that traditionally contained needle and thread but now commonly contains money.

³⁵ *Me cha* is flint used and worn by males. It is attached to a bag containing horse manure. A fire is made by placing the dry manure on a stone and striking the stone with the flint.

³⁶ These teardrop-shaped decorations with coral in the center

chains. They lace a *ga'u* ³⁷ from the top of the right shoulder to the left waist. *Dor bkra* are red and white trousers (Figure 43). Villagers' discussions of dance dress reflects great pride in clothes and ornaments.

Ten minutes after arriving, the village head leads the male dancers to the center of where two circles have been drawn on the ground with flour. A swastika has also been drawn with flour (Figure 58) inside the circles. The village leader leads the dancers between the two circles of flour. The man following the village leader is the dance leader and his group follows him. Another group of male dancers follows this group.

They move clockwise in a circle. Each group has nineteen men. There are thirty-eight male dancers in total. The village chief leaves. The two leaders discuss briefly with the men beside them, then begin dancing (Figure 48). They first dance *bro mchod* 'offering dance' and while dancing, the female dancers dress in the tent (Figure 50). The leader who comes first to the dance area sings and dances first. The first group sings and the entire group dances together.

By ten or eleven a.m., the male dancers have danced three offering dances and the two village chiefs lead the female dancers onto the dance ground. It is now the female dancers' turn to perform the offering dance.

The female dancers' dress is much grander than that of women in the audience. They do not, however, tie their plaits atop their heads, but instead drape them and the lines of their jewelry down their backs to show respect to the audience. When people in Sde dge meet a great *bla ma* or other respected person they usually let down the plaits normally tied on their head, remove their hat, and drape their sleeves over their shoulder if their arms have been taken out of their robes. Each woman wears three or four strings of jewelry.

Following are examples of dance song lyrics. The first song is a male *bro mchod* 'offering dance' song (A bo ma):

are worn on both sides of the waist by both males and females. They may be gold or silver.

³⁷ A metal box containing an amulet.

¹བཞད་པ་པོ་ཕྱོགས་བདེ་ལེགས་སྒྲིལ་འདྲ་བཞུགས།

¹*Bzhad pa pho phyogs bde legs srol 'dra bzhugs.*³⁸

²བོད་ཡུལ་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་མ་བསྐྱར་བོད་ཡུལ་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་བསྐྱར།

³བོད་ཡུལ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་བསྐྱར་ས་ས་འདི་རྒྱ་གར་ཡུལ།

⁴ས་འདིའི་རྒྱ་གར་ཡུལ་ལ་ལྷ་མ་བཟང་པོ་བཞུགས།

⁵ལྷ་མ་སྐལ་བཟང་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ཞབས་བློ་འདི་ལ་དགའ་ཡིན་པས་བློ་ཡི་མཚན་པ་
འབྲུལ།

²Tibet is where Buddhism spread,

³India is where Buddhism originated.

⁴A great *bla ma* lives in India,

⁵Because Bla ma Skal bzang rgya mtsho watches the dances,
we offer them to him to enjoy.

⁶བོད་ཡུལ་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་མ་བསྐྱར་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་བསྐྱར།

⁷བོད་ཡུལ་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་བསྐྱར་ས་ས་འདི་ཕྱེ་དགེ་ལུང་།

⁸ས་གཡང་ཕྱེ་དགེ་རྒྱལ་པོས་ལྷ་མོ་བློ་ལ་གཟིགས།

⁹ལྷ་མོ་བློ་ལ་གཟིགས་ན་བློ་ཡི་མཚན་པ་འབྲུལ།

⁶Tibet is where Buddhism spread,

⁷The land of Sde dge is where Buddhism spread in Tibet.

⁸The king of the prosperous Sde dge Kingdom likes dances.

⁹And therefore we offer the dances to him to enjoy.

¹⁰བོད་ཡུལ་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་མ་བསྐྱར་བོད་ཡུལ་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་བསྐྱར།

¹¹བོད་ཡུལ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་བསྐྱར་ས་ས་འདི་རྒྱ་ནག་ཡུལ།

¹²རྒྱལ་སྐལ་འཕགས་པ་འཇམ་དབྱངས་ལྷ་མོ་བློ་ལ་གཟིགས།

¹³ལྷ་མོ་བློ་ལ་གཟིགས་ན་བློ་ཡི་མཚན་པ་འབྲུལ།

¹⁰Tibet is where Buddhism spread.

¹¹China is where Tibetan Buddhism originated.

¹²Manjushri, the Bodhisattva prince, likes dances.

¹³And therefore we offer the dances to him to enjoy.

³⁸ Every male dance begins and ends with these vocables.

¹⁴བཞད་པ་པོ་ཕྱགས་བདེ་ལྷགས་སྤལ་འདྲ་བཞུགས།

¹⁴*Bzhad pa pho phyogs bde legs srol 'dra bzhugs.*

This is a female offering dance song (Tshong lha mo):

¹ཨ་ལིས་ཨེ་བས་མ་ནི་བསྐྱེ་ཤོག།

¹*A lis e bso ma Ni pad+ma shog*³⁹

²སྣང་ལྷ་སེར་པོ་གདན་ཐོག་མེ་ཉྱག་བསྐྱེ་སེར་པོ།

³འདབ་བཞི་འདབ་ལོ་བརྒྱད།

⁴འདབ་བརྒྱད་ཡག་ལེ་སྣང་ཕྱགས་ལྷ་ལ་མཆོད།

²Yellow peonies on yellow meadows,

³Have eight petals.

⁴Offer the eight-petaled flowers to deities in the upper realm.

⁵སྣང་ལྷ་སྦྲུལ་པོ་གདན་ཐོག་མེ་ཉྱག་བསྐྱེ་སྦྲུལ་པོ།

⁶འདབ་བཞི་འདབ་ལོ་བརྒྱད།

⁷འདབ་བརྒྱད་ཡག་ལེ་བར་ཕྱགས་གཉན་ལ་མཆོད།

⁵Green peonies on the green grassland,

⁶Have eight petals.

⁷Offer the eight-petaled flowers to *gnyan*⁴⁰ in the middle realm.

⁸སྣང་ལྷ་དཀར་པོ་གདན་ཐོག་མེ་ཉྱག་བསྐྱེ་དཀར་པོ།

⁹འདབ་བཞི་འདབ་ལོ་བརྒྱད།

¹⁰འདབ་བརྒྱད་ཡག་ལེ་འོག་ཕྱགས་སྤལ་ལ་མཆོད།

⁸White peonies on the whitish grassland,

⁹Have eight petals.

¹⁰Offer the eight-petaled flowers to *klu*⁴¹ in the lower realm.

³⁹ Every female dance song begins and ends with these vocables.

⁴⁰ A type of powerful non-human spirit.

⁴¹ Serpent deities that reside in water.

¹¹ཨ་ལིས་ཨེ་བསོ་མ་ནི་བརྟེ་ཤོག།

¹¹*A lis e bso ma Ni pad+ma shog.*

This is another female offering dance song (Tshong lha mo):

¹ཨ་ལིས་ཨེ་བསོ་མ་ནི་བརྟེ་ཤོག།

¹*A lis e bso ma Ni pad+ma shog.*

²དགུང་ལ་ཨ་ཕྱོན་གོ་བྱ་(ཡ་ལ་)གང་མཚན་(དོ་ལ)།

³གཙང་(གཞུང)ལ་ཉི་ཟླ་རས་དཀར་(ཡ་ལ་)ཕྱོང་བྱར་(དོ་ལ)།

⁴བྱར་ལ་སྐར་ཚལས་མར་ཁུ་(ཡ་ལ་)མཚོ་མོ་འབྱུལ་(དོ་ལ)།

⁵མཐའ་ལ་བརྟེན་པའི་(ཡ་ལ་)ལྗང་ཕྱགས་ལྷ་ལ་(དོ་ལ)མཚན།

²Offer lamps, *ya la*, with insides like the depths of the blue sky, *do la*.

³The wicks, *ya la*, made of white cloth, are like the sun and moon in the blue sky, *do la*.

⁴The melted butter, *ya la*, swirling around the wicks, is like a cluster of stars, *do la*.

⁵Offer them, *ya la*, to gods in the upper realm, *do la*.

⁶ལྗང་བྱ་ནག་ཁ་སྐོང་(ཡ་ལ་)གང་མཚན་(དོ་ལ)།

⁷གཡུ་འབྲུག་ཕྱོན་མོ་རས་དཀར་(ཡ་ལ་)ཕྱོང་བྱར་(དོ་ལ)།

⁸སྐང་ཆར་བེལ་མ་མར་ཁུ་(ཡ་ལ་)མཚོ་མོ་འབྱུལ་(དོ་ལ)།

⁹མཐའ་ལ་བརྟེན་པའི་བར་ཕྱགས་གཉེན་ལ་(དོ་ལ)མཚན།

⁶Offer the lamps, *ya la*, with insides like the Chinese in the lower realm,⁴² *do la*

⁷The wicks, *ya la*, made of white cloth, are like turquoise dragons, *do la*.

⁸The melted butter, *ya la*, swirling around the wicks, is like gentle rain, *do la*.

⁹Offer them, *ya la*, to *gnyan* in the middle realm, *do la*.

⁴² Locals could not explain the meaning of this expression.

¹⁰བླ་ར་ཁ་མོ་ཁ་སྒྲིང་(ཡ་ལ་)གང་མཚན་(དོ་ལ་)॥

¹¹བླ་བ་ཚ་ཞང་རས་དཀར་(ཡ་ལ་)ཐྱོང་བྱར་(དོ་ལ་)॥

¹²ཁ་མཚར་ཕྱེད་མོ་མར་ཁུ་(ཡ་ལ་)མཚོ་མོ་འབྱུལ་(དོ་ལ་)॥

¹³མཐའ་ལ་བརྟེན་པའི་འོག་ཕྱགས་སྤུ་ལ་མཚན་॥

¹⁰Offer the lamps, *ya la*, with insides like the dance ground, *do la*.

¹¹The lamp wicks, *ya la*, made of white cloth, are like nephew and uncle dancers, *do la*.

¹²The melted butter, *ya la*, swirling around, is like jokes and games, *do la*.

¹³Offer them to, *ya la*, *klu* in the lower realm, *do la*.

¹⁴ཨ་ལིས་ཨེ་བསོ་མ་ནི་བསྒྲུ་ཤོག॥

¹⁴*A lis e bso ma Ni pad+ma shog.*

After the offering dance songs, dancers sing '*dzom bro* 'gathering dance'. Below are the lyrics for the male gathering dance song (A bo ma):

¹བཞད་པ་པོ་ཕྱགས་བདེ་ལེགས་སྒོལ་འདྲ་བཞུགས॥

¹*Bzhad pa pho phyogs bde legs srol 'dra bzhugs.*

²འཛོམས་ཡར་ལ་འཛོམས॥ དགའ་སྦྱིད་པོ་གསུམ་འཛོམས॥

³སོ་བྲང་ཁ་མོ་གཡས་ཟུར་ལ॥ གསེར་གྱི་ཉི་མ་ཤར་བྱང་॥

⁴གསེར་གྱི་ཉི་མ་མ་རེད॥

⁵རང་ཕྱགས་སྤུ་མ་བཟང་པོ་ཉི་མ་ཤར་ཤར་ལེབས་བྱང་॥

²Gather and gather up here. Joyfulness and happiness, three are present.⁴³

³The golden sun shines on the right upper part of the multi-colored palace.

⁴It is not the golden sun,

⁵But our great *bla ma* coming like the rising sun.

⁴³ We cannot explain why joyfulness and happiness are referred to as 'three'.

⁶འཛོམས་ཡར་ལ་འཛོམས། དགའ་སྦྱིད་པོ་གསུམ་འཛོམས།

⁷ཕྱོ་བྱང་ཁྲ་མོ་གཡས་ཟུར་ལ། དདུལ་གྱི་ཟླ་བ་ཤར་བྱང་།

⁸དདུལ་གྱི་ཟླ་བ་མ་རེད།

⁹རང་ཕྱོགས་དཔོན་པོ་བཟང་པོ་ཟླ་བ་ཤར་ཤར་ཕེབས་བྱང་།

⁶Gather and gather up here. Joyfulness and happiness, three are present.

⁷The silver moon shines on the right upper part of the multi-colored palace.

⁸It is not the silver moon,

⁹But our great leader coming like the rising moon.

¹⁰འཛོམས་ཡར་ལ་འཛོམས། དགའ་སྦྱིད་པོ་གསུམ་འཛོམས།

¹¹ཕྱོ་བྱང་ཕྲ་མོ་གཡས་ཟུར་ལ། དུང་གི་སྐར་མ་ཤར་བྱང་།

¹²དུང་གི་སྐར་མ་མ་རེད།

¹³རང་ཕྱོགས་པ་ཁུ་བཟང་པོ་སྐར་མ་ཤར་ཤར་ཕེབས་བྱང་།

¹⁰Gather and gather up here. Joyfulness and happiness, three are present.

¹¹The white conch stars shine on the right upper part of the multi-colored palace.

¹²They are not white conch stars,

¹³But our fathers and uncles coming like the rising stars.

¹⁴བཞད་པ་ཕོ་ཕྱོགས་བདེ་ལེགས་སྟོལ་འདྲ་བཞུགས།

¹⁴*Bzhad pa pho phyogs bde legs srol 'dra bzugs.*

Below are the lyrics of the female gathering dance song (Tshong lha mo):

¹ཨ་ལིས་ཨེ་བསོ་མ་ནི་པརྟེ་ཤོག།

¹*A lis e bso ma Ni pad+ma shog*

²སེར་པོ་གསེར་གྱི་བུམ་པ་ཡག་དང་གཅིག།

³མ་བུའི་སྟོ་མདངས་ཁ་རྒྱན་ཡག་དང་གཉིས།

⁴འཆི་མེད་འོ་མའི་བདུད་ཚི་ཡག་དང་གསུམ།

⁵དེ་གསུམ་མི་གཅིག་པ་ཡུལ་ཁ་ཁ་རེད།

⁶འཛོམས་ས་བཟང་པོ་སྒྲ་མའི་ཕྱག་ལ་འཛོམས།

²The fine golden vase is first.

³The fine ornate peacock feathers are second.

⁴The fine milk elixir is third.

⁵All three are different and come from different places,

⁶But have gathered in the hands of a good *bla ma*.

⁷རྒྱ་བྱོན་གོས་ཆེན་འབྲུག་མ་ཡག་དང་གཅིག།

⁸ནང་རྒྱོན་ལྷག་ཆུང་ཆ་རྩ་ཡག་དང་གཉིས།

⁹ཆུ་སྐམ་དཀར་ཁ་མཐའ་རྒྱ་ཡག་དང་གསུམ།

¹⁰དེ་གསུམ་མི་གཅིག་པ་ཡུལ་ཁ་ཁ་རེད།

¹¹འཛོམས་ས་བཟང་པོ་དཔོན་པོའི་ལུས་ལ་འཛོམས།

⁷The fine dragon-patterned silk is first.

⁸The fine lambskin lining is second.

⁹The robe hem ornamented with white-striped otter skin is third.

¹⁰All three are different and come from different places.

¹¹But have gathered on the body of a good leader.

¹²སྒྲ་སྤེལ་སེར་པོ་སེར་མདོག་ཡག་དང་གཅིག།

¹³བྱ་སྤྲ་དམར་པོ་ཆོས་ཁ་ཡག་དང་གཉིས།

¹⁴རྒྱ་གཡུ་བྱ་དཀར་འོ་མའི་མདོག་དང་གསུམ།

¹⁵དེ་གསུམ་འཛོམས་ས་མི་གཅིག་པ་ཡུལ་ཁ་ཁ་རེད།

¹⁶འཛོམས་ས་བཟང་པོ་མ་སྒྲའི་ཕྱག་ལ་འཛོམས།

¹²The fine yellow amber is first.

¹³The fine red coral is second.

¹⁴The fine white Rgya g.yu gru ka⁴⁴ is third.

¹⁵All three are different and come from different places.

¹⁶But have gathered in the hands of good mothers and sisters.

¹⁷ཨ་ལིས་ཨེ་བསོ་མ་ནི་བརྟེ་ཤོག།

¹⁷*A lis e bso ma Ni pad+ma shog*

⁴⁴ A kind of turquoise Sman shod people consider fluorescent and also a hyperbolic title that praises turquoise.

After the gathering dance songs, the *gzhung bro* 'middle dance' song is performed. Both men and women take longer steps during this dance (Figure 55). Below are lyrics for the males' middle dance song (A bo ma):

¹བཞད་པ་པོ་ཕྱགས་བདེ་ལེགས་སྒོལ་འདྲ་བཞུགས།

¹*Bzhad pa pho phyogs bde legs srol 'dra bzhugs.*

²སྐྱ་མ་སྐོབ་དཔོན་པདྨ་གང་དང་གང་ལ་འབྱུངས།

³སྐྱ་མ་སྐོབ་དཔོན་པདྨ་ཟངས་མདོག་པལ་གྱི་རི་ལ་འབྱུངས།

⁴སྐྱ་མ་ཆེ་ཆུང་ཆུང་སྐོབ་དཔོན་མཇལ་དུ་ཕེབས་འགྲོ།

²Where was Master Padmasambhava⁴⁵ born?

³Master Padmasambhava was born on the noble copper-colored mountain,

⁴And *bla ma* of all rank visit him.

⁵སྤྱིང་ཕུག་གེ་སར་རྒྱལ་པོ་གང་དང་གང་ལ་འབྱུངས།

⁶སྤྱིང་ཕུག་གེ་སར་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཁྱ་མོ་སྤྱིང་དཀར་སྟོང་ལ་འབྱུངས།

⁷སྤྱིང་ཕུག་ཆེ་ཆུང་ཆུང་གེ་སར་མཇལ་དུ་ཕེབས་འགྲོ།

⁵Where was King Ge sar born?

⁶King Ge sar was born in the upper part of Gling,

⁷And all the elders and youth of Gling visit him.

⁸ཆོང་དཔོན་ནོར་བུ་བཟང་པོ་གང་དང་གང་ལ་འབྱུངས།

⁹ཆོང་དཔོན་ནོར་བུ་བཟང་པོ་རྒྱ་ནག་རི་བོའི་ཆེ་ལ་འབྱུངས།

¹⁰ཆོང་དཔོན་ཆེ་ཆུང་ཆུང་ཆོང་དཔོན་མཇལ་དུ་ཕེབས་འགྲོ།

⁸Where was Nor bu bzang po, the merchant, born?

⁹Merchant Nor bu bzang po was born on Wutai Mountain,⁴⁶

¹⁰And merchants of all rank visit him.

¹¹བཞད་པ་པོ་ཕྱགས་བདེ་ལེགས་སྒོལ་འདྲ་བཞུགས།

¹¹*Bzhad pa pho phyogs bde legs bsol 'dra bzhugs.*

⁴⁵ Padmasambhava is the founder of the Rnying ma pa sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

⁴⁶ A sacred Buddhist mountain in Shanxi Province, China.

Below is another middle dance song performed by males (A bo ma):

¹བཞད་པ་པོ་ཕྱགས་བདེ་ལེགས་སྒོལ་འདྲ་བལྟགས།

¹*Bzhad pa pho phyogs bde legs bsol 'dra bzhugs.*

²(ཨ་རྟ་ཡེ་)བཟ་ཤིས་ལྷང་པའི་ཕུ་ལ་གསེར་གྱི་དྲུལ་འཁོར་བཤམས་ཡོད།

³(ཨ་རྟ་ཡེ་)གསེར་གྱི་དྲུལ་འཁོར་སྟང་ལ་གསེར་གྱི་བུམ་པ་བཤམས་ཡོད།

⁴(ཨ་རྟ་ཡེ་)ཀྱ་ནག་བཟ་ཤིས་ཁ་བཏགས་བུམ་པའི་ན་བཟའ་སྒོལ་ཡོད།

⁵(ཨ་རྟ་ཡེ་)འཆེ་མདའ་འོ་མའི་བདུད་རྩི་བུམ་པའི་གཟུངས་ཀྱི་བཤམས་ཡོད།

⁶(ཨ་རྟ་ཡེ་)ཀྱ་གར་མ་བྱའི་སྒྲོ་མདངས་བུམ་པའི་ཁ་ལ་བརྒྱན་ཡོད།

²*A ho ye! A golden mandala is displayed in the upper part of the auspicious valley.*

³*A ho ye! A golden vase is displayed atop the golden mandala.*

⁴*A ho ye! An auspicious kha btags⁴⁷ from China is draped around the vase.*

⁵*A ho ye! The vase contains the milky elixir of immortality.*

⁶*A ho ye! Indian peacock feathers decorate the vase's mouth.*

⁷(ཨ་རྟ་ཡེ་)བཟ་ཤིས་ལྷང་པའི་སྟང་ལ་དབུལ་གྱི་དྲུལ་འཁོར་བཤམས་ཡོད།

⁸(ཨ་རྟ་ཡེ་)དབུལ་གྱི་དྲུལ་འཁོར་སྟང་ལ་དབུལ་གྱི་བུམ་པ་བཤམས་ཡོད།

⁹(ཨ་རྟ་ཡེ་)ཀྱ་ནག་བཟ་ཤིས་ཁ་བཏགས་བུམ་པའི་ན་བཟའ་སྒོལ་ཡོད།

¹⁰(ཨ་རྟ་ཡེ་)འཆེ་མདའ་འོ་མའི་བདུད་རྩི་བུམ་པའི་གཟུངས་ཀྱི་བཤམས་ཡོད།

¹¹(ཨ་རྟ་ཡེ་)ཀྱ་གར་མ་བྱའི་སྒྲོ་མདངས་བུམ་པའི་ཁ་ལ་བརྒྱན་ཡོད།

⁷*A ho ye! A silver mandala is displayed, in the middle of the auspicious valley.*

⁸*A ho ye! A silver vase is displayed atop the silver mandala.*

⁹*A ho ye! An auspicious kha btags from China is draped around the vase.*

¹⁰*A ho ye! The vase contains the milky elixir of immortality.*

¹¹*A ho ye! Indian peacock feathers decorate the vase's mouth.*

⁴⁷ A white scarf symbolizing auspiciousness used to greet respected people.

¹² (ཨ་ཏྲཱ་ཡེ་)བག་ཤིས་ལྷང་པའི་མདའ་ལ་དྲུང་གི་དགྲིལ་འཁོར་བཤམས་ཡོད།

¹³ (ཨ་ཏྲཱ་ཡེ་)དྲུང་གི་དགྲིལ་འཁོར་སྒྲིང་ལ་དྲུང་གི་བུམ་པ་བཤམས་ཡོད།

¹⁴ (ཨ་ཏྲཱ་ཡེ་)རྒྱ་ནག་བག་ཤིས་ཁ་བཏགས་བུམ་པའི་ན་བཟའ་སྒྲིལ་ཡོད།

¹⁵ (ཨ་ཏྲཱ་ཡེ་)འཆེ་མེད་འོ་མའི་བདུད་རྩི་བུམ་པའི་གཟུངས་རྒྱ་བཤམས་ཡོད།

¹⁶ (ཨ་ཏྲཱ་ཡེ་)རྒྱ་གར་མ་བྱའི་སྒྲོ་མདངས་བུམ་པའི་ཁ་ལ་བརྒྱན་ཡོད།

¹² *A ho ye! A white conch mandala is displayed in the lower part of the auspicious valley.*

¹³ *A ho ye! A white conch vase is displayed atop the white conch mandala,*

¹⁴ *A ho ye! An auspicious kha btags from China is draped around the vase.*

¹⁵ *A ho ye! The vase contains the milky elixir of immortality.*

¹⁶ *A ho ye! Indian peacock feathers decorate the vase's mouth.*

¹⁷ བཞད་པ་པོ་ཕྱགས་བདེ་ལེགས་སྒྲིལ་འདྲ་བཞུགས།

¹⁷ *Bzhad pa pho phyogs bde legs srol 'dra bzhugs.*

Below are the female middle dance song lyrics (Tshong lha mo):

¹ ཨ་ལིས་ཨེ་བསོ་མ་ནི་པརྟེ་ཤོག།

¹ *A lis e bso ma Ni pad+ma shog*

² (ཨ་རེ་)བྱང་རྒྱ་གར་རི་ཡི་རི་མགོ་ལ་(ལོ་བྱེ་ལོ་བྱང་)།

³ (ཨ་རེ་)རྩྭ་ཡར་སྐྱེས་ཐམས་ཅད་རྩི་རྟོག་རེད་(ལོ་བྱེ་ལོ་བྱང་)།

⁴ (ཨ་རེ་)ལྷག་གཡང་དཀར་ཤོག་དང་མཉམ་ཟ་བྱེད་(ལོ་བྱེ་ལོ་བྱང་)།

⁵ (ཨ་རེ་)ཆེ་གཅིག་ལ་མཉམ་ཟ་མ་འོང་ན་(ལོ་བྱེ་ལོ་བྱང་)།

⁶ (ཨ་རེ་)བཟའ་ཁོས་ཁ་ཤོག་དང་མཉམ་ཟ་བཟོ་(ལོ་བྱེ་ལོ་བྱང་)།

² *A re! Atop a mountain in India, in the north, lo bye lo byung.*⁴⁸

³ *A re! All the grass that grows there is rtsi tog,⁴⁹ lo bye lo*

⁴⁸ *Lo bye lo byung* are vocables. People may refer to the dances by the vocables sung.

⁴⁹ A good quality grass that grows on mountaintops where livestock are taken to feed.

byung.

⁴A re! White sheep gather to eat, *lo bye lo byung*.

⁵A re! Although we cannot eat together all our life, *lo bye lo byung*.

⁶A re! We gather whenever we have time and eat together, *lo bye lo byung*.

⁷(ཨ་རེ་)བྱང་ཁྱུ་གར་རི་ཡི་རི་སྒྲིང་ལ་(ལོ་བྱེ་ལོ་བྱང་)॥

⁸(ཨ་རེ་)རྩ་ཡར་སྐྱེས་ཐམས་ཅད་སྣམ་མ་རེད་(ལོ་བྱེ་ལོ་བྱང་)॥

⁹(ཨ་རེ་)འབྲི་མེར་ཁམས་ཤོག་དང་མཉམ་ཟ་བྱེད་(ལོ་བྱེ་ལོ་བྱང་)॥

¹⁰(ཨ་རེ་)ཆོ་གཅིག་ལ་མཉམ་ཟ་མ་འོང་ན་(ལོ་བྱེ་ལོ་བྱང་)॥

¹¹(ཨ་རེ་)བཟའ་ཁམ་ཁ་ཤོག་དང་མཉམ་ཟ་བཟོ་(ལོ་བྱེ་ལོ་བྱང་)॥

⁷A re! On the middle of a mountain in northern India, *lo bye lo byung*.

⁸A re! All the grass that grows there is *snam ma*,⁵⁰ *lo bye lo byung*.

⁹A re! Brown yaks gather to eat, *lo bye lo byung*.

¹⁰A re! Although we cannot eat together all our life, *lo bye lo byung*.

¹¹A re! We gather whenever we have time and eat together, *lo bye lo byung*.

¹²(ཨ་རེ་)བྱང་ཁྱུ་གར་རི་ཡི་རི་མཐའ་ལ་(ལོ་བྱེ་ལོ་བྱང་)॥

¹³(ཨ་རེ་)རྩ་ཡར་སྐྱེས་ཐམས་ཅད་མཁན་དགར་རེད་(ལོ་བྱེ་ལོ་བྱང་)॥

¹⁴(ཨ་རེ་)རྟ་འདྲོ་དགའ་ཤོག་དང་མཉམ་ཟ་བྱེད་(ལོ་བྱེ་ལོ་བྱང་)॥

¹⁵(ཨ་རེ་)ཆོ་གཅིག་ལ་མཉམ་ཟ་མ་འོངས་ན་(ལོ་བྱེ་ལོ་བྱང་)॥

¹⁶(ཨ་རེ་)བཟའ་ཁམ་ཁ་ཤོག་དང་མཉམ་ཟ་བཟོ་(ལོ་བྱེ་ལོ་བྱང་)॥

¹²A re! At the foot of a mountain in northern India, *lo bye lo byung*.

¹³A re! All the grass that grows there is white fern,⁵¹ *lo bye*

⁵⁰ A grass of uniform height that grows in monoculture meadows.

⁵¹ Such ferns grow on the lower slopes of mountains and in valleys. They have a strong odor, and their stems are thick and tough.

lo byung.

¹⁴ *A re!* The horses gather to eat, *lo bye lo byung.*

¹⁵ *A re!* Although we cannot eat together all our life, *lo bye lo byung.*

¹⁶ *A re!* We gather whenever we have time and eat together, *lo bye lo byung.*

¹⁷ ཨ་ལིས་ཨེ་བསོ་མ་ནི་བཞེ་ཤོག།

¹⁷ *A lis e bso ma Ni pad+ma shog*

The *bkra shis* 'closing dance' song is last, though it is not sung if dancing will continue the next day. Below are the lyrics for the closing dance song performed by the men (A bo ma):

¹ བཞད་པ་པོ་ཕྱོགས་བདེ་ལེགས་སྟོལ་འདྲ་བཞུགས།།

¹ *Bzhad pa pho phyogs bde legs srol 'dra bzhugs.*

² (ཨ་ཡེ་)དགུང་(ཤིང་)ཨ་ཐོན་འདི་བཞད་ཀྱི་བག་ཤིས་ཤོག་(ཨ་ཡེ)།།

³ (ཨ་ཡེ་)གཙང་(ཆུང་)ཉི་ཟླ་འདི་འཁོར་བའི་བག་ཤིས་ཤོག་(ཨ་ཡེ)།།

⁴ (ཨ་ཡེ་)ཟུར་(ཤིང་)སྐར་ཚགས་འཛོམ་བའི་བག་ཤིས་ཤོག་(ཨ་ཡེ)།།

¹ *A ye!* May the deep blue sky be full of *bzhad*,⁵² *a ye.*

² *A ye!* May sun and moon rotate in the sky, *a ye.*

³ *A ye!* May stars cluster in the sky, *a ye.*

⁴ (ཨ་ཡེ་)མྱོ་རྒྱ་ནག་འདི་བཞད་ཀྱི་བག་ཤིས་ཤོག་(ཨ་ཡེ)།།

⁵ (ཨ་ཡེ་)གཡུ་འབྲུག་ཐོན་མོ་འདི་འཁོར་བའི་བག་ཤིས་ཤོག་(ཨ་ཡེ)།།

⁶ (ཨ་ཡེ་)སྤང་ཆར་བེལ་མ་འདི་འཛོམ་བའི་བག་ཤིས་ཤོག་(ཨ་ཡེ)།།

⁴ *A ye!* May China in the south be boundless, *a ye.*

⁵ *A ye!* May the turquoise dragon circle, *a ye.*

⁶ *A ye!* May gentle rains be abundant, *a ye.*

⁷ (ཨ་ཡེ་)བློར་བྲལ་མོ་འདི་བཞད་ཀྱི་བག་ཤིས་ཤོག་(ཨ་ཡེ)།།

⁵² *Bzhad* is a dance with fast steps and dramatic gestures that is danced by men and women together.

⁸ཨ་ཡེ་བློ་བ་ཆ་ཞང་འདི་འཛུ་པའི་བག་ཤིས་ཤོག་ཨ་ཡེ།

⁹ཨ་ཡེ་ཁ་མཚར་རྩེད་མོ་འདི་འཁོར་བའི་བག་ཤིས་ཤོག་ཨ་ཡེ།

⁷*A ye! May the multi-colored dance ground be boundless, a ye.*

⁸*A ye! May dancers gather, a ye.*

⁹*A ye May jokes circulate, a ye.*

¹⁰བཞད་པ་ཕོ་ཕྱགས་བདེ་ལེགས་སྒོལ་འདྲ་བཞུགས།

¹⁰*Bzhad pa pho phyogs bde legs srol 'dra bzhugs.*

Below are the lyrics for the closing dance song performed by the women (Tshong lha mo):

¹ཨ་ལིས་ཨེ་བསོ་མ་ནི་བརྩེ་ཤོག།

¹*A lis e bso ma Ni pad+ma shog*

²ཤིང་བག་ཤིས་ལྷང་པའི་ཕུ་ལམ་ལ།

³ཤིང་གསེར་ཤིང་ཨ་ཕྱོན་དགུང་དང་མཉམ།

⁴ཤིང་གསེར་ཤིང་སྟེང་ལ་གསེར་བྱ་བབས།

⁵བྱ་འགྲོ་བའི་བྱ་ལ་ལམ་ཡག་ཤོག།

⁶ཤིང་འདུག་མུ་ཤིང་ལ་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚྭ་མཉམ།

²*In the upper part of the auspicious valley,*

³*Golden trees grow as high as the blue sky,*

⁴*And golden birds land on the golden trees.*

⁵*May the departing birds have a safe journey,*

⁶*And may the trees that remain flourish.*

⁷ཤིང་བག་ཤིས་ལྷང་པའི་སྟེང་ལམ་ལ།

⁸ཤིང་དངུལ་ཤིང་ཨ་ཕྱོན་དགུང་དང་མཉམ།

⁹ཤིང་དངུལ་ཤིང་སྟེང་ལ་དངུལ་བྱ་བབས།

¹⁰བྱ་འགྲོ་བའི་བྱ་ལ་ལམ་ཡག་ཤོག།

¹¹ཤིང་འདུག་མུ་ཤིང་ལ་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚྭ་མཉམ།

⁷*In the middle of the auspicious valley,*

⁸*Silver trees grow as high as the blue sky,*

⁹*And birds land on the silver trees.*

¹⁰May the departing birds have a safe journey,

¹¹And may the trees that remain flourish.

¹²ཤིང་བྲག་ཤིས་ལུང་བའི་མདའ་ལམ་ལ།

¹³ཤིང་རུང་ཤིང་ཨ་ཕྱོན་དགུང་དང་མཉམ།

¹⁴ཤིང་རུང་ཤིང་སྟེང་ལ་རུང་བྱ་བབས།

¹⁵བྱ་འགྲོ་བའི་བྱ་ལ་ལམ་ཡག་ཤོག།

¹⁶ཤིང་འདུག་མུ་ཤིང་ལ་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚྭ་སྟོགས།

¹²In the lower part of the auspicious valley,

¹³White conch trees touch the blue sky,

¹⁴And conch birds land on the conch trees.

¹⁵May the departing birds have a safe journey,

¹⁶And may the trees that remain flourish.

¹⁷ཨ་ལིས་ཨེ་བསོ་མ་ནི་བདེ་ཤོག།

¹⁷*A lis e bso ma Ni pad+ma shog*

PHOTOGRAPHS

Figure 42.

Dkun dga' phun tshogs (born 1981) stands inside the tent while the female dancers dance outside the tent. Photograph by Zla ba grab pa. February 2010.

Figure 43.

The left side of a male dancer's costume. The *me cha* hangs from the *blo bzung* and the *ga'u* is hung with a white *kha btags*. Photograph by Zla ba grab pa. February 2010.

Figure 44.

Tshong chos 'tsho (born 1988). Usually women between the ages of eighteen and fifty dance. Youths know few dances. Photograph by 'Chi med rdo rje. February 2010.

Figure 45.

Women wear gold, silver, coral, turquoise, and other jewels. Such clothing is only worn in winter, though *phrug* robes may also be worn in summer. Photograph by 'Chi med rdo rje. February 2010.

Figure 46.

Skar ma bsam gdan (born 1946), one of two male dance leaders. Photograph by 'Chi med rdo rje. February 2010.

Figure 47.

Early on the morning of the dance, A bo ma, a dance leader, discusses the upcoming performances with his group. Men dance first, followed by women. Photograph by 'Chi med rdo rje. February 2010.

Figure 48.

Male dancers perform first at DzaM mda' Village dancing ground. Photograph by 'Chi med rdo rje. February 2010.

Figure 49.

The audience watches the dance performance. Women in the audience wrap their turquoise braid decorations around their heads as they do in daily life. Dancers wear their decorations down as a sign of respect to the audience. This dance performance is in DzaM mda' Village with around 110 male and female dancers as part of the Lo sar celebration in February 2010.

Photograph by 'Chi med rdo rje. February 2010.

Figure 50.

Female dancers dress in the tent as male dancers perform outside. Photograph by Zla ba grab pa. February 2010.

Figure 51.

Bo nyed (right), one of two female dance leaders, leads other dancers. Photograph by 'Chi med rdo rje. February 2010.

Figure 52.

Tshong lha mo leads other women. Photograph by 'Chi med rdo rje. February 2010.

Figure 53.

Women dance on one side of the dancing ground. Photograph by 'Chi med rdo rje. February 2010.

Figure 54.

A line of women dance. Village elders sit nearest the camera. Photograph by 'Chi med rdo rje. February 2010.

Figure 55.

Women dance quickly in the evening. Dances begin slowly in the morning, and increase in speed and energy as the day progresses. Photograph by 'Chi med rdo rje. February 2010.

Figure 56.

Women dance outside as male dancers discuss the dance and eat. Photograph by 'Chi med rdo rje. February 2010.

Figure 57.

Males begin the next dance as the female dancers walk off the dancing ground. Dances run from early in the morning until late at night and may continue through the night. Photograph by 'Chi med rdo rje. February 2010.

Figure 58.

Male dancers make a circle on the dancing ground. The *g.yung drung* (Buddhist swastika) is made from white flour. Photograph by Zla ba grab pa. February 2010.

Figure 59.

Villagers offer *kha btags* to the two lines of female dancers to show appreciation. They also offer thanks to the male dancers at the day's end. Photograph by Zla ba grab pa. February 2010.





































PART THREE: WORK AND WORK SONGS IN SMAN
SHOD

INTRODUCTION

Locals lack a general name for work songs, whose lyrics employ such vocables as '*phyo*' or '*yo*'. Although lacking specific meaning, '*phyo*' is often used to encourage people to increase their efforts while working. For example, while moving or carrying something, '*phyo*' is said. Work songs were once common, but in 2010 only five to ten people could sing work songs and no single person could sing all the types of work songs. In the case of threshing songs, I found no one who could remember all the lyrics. Although some elders sung work songs in the past, they had forgotten the lyrics. Most youths could not sing any work songs and some did not know such songs had ever existed. The following tables detail the annual work cycle and the songs that accompany it.

Farming		
Lunar Month	Farm Activity	Song
1	Lo sar	
2	fertilize and plow	plowing song and plow speech
3	sow <i>yung ma</i> ⁵³	
4	loosen earth in barley fields	
5	loosen earth in <i>yung ma</i> fields	
6	loosen earth in <i>yung ma</i> fields	
7	harvest grass and barley	<i>mgur ma</i> <i>a la phyo</i>
8	harvest <i>yung ma</i>	
9	thresh barley	threshing song
10	thresh and collect wood	threshing song
11	collect wood	
12	Lo sar preparation	

⁵³ *Yung ma* resemble radishes and are cultivated for human and livestock consumption.

Herding			
Lunar Month	Full-time Herders	Small-scale Herders	Song
1	Lo sar	Lo sar	
2	move to spring pastures	sheep birthing	
3	yak birthing	<i>mdzo mo</i> birthing	milking song
4	milk twice a day	milk twice a day	milking song
5	move to summer pasture, milk yaks, and cut yak hair	move to summer pasture, farm work	milking song
6	milk three times daily give salt to livestock, begin moving to autumn pasture	milk three times daily, farm work	milking song
7	collect fodder, livestock begin mating	harvest, collect fodder, livestock begin mating	harvest and milking songs
8	mating season, move to winter house	mating season, move to winter house	milking song
9	butcher male yak	butcher <i>to le</i> or <i>mdzo</i> , move to winter house	milking song
10	milk production decreases	threshing	threshing song
11	yak weaning	<i>mdzo mo</i> weaning	
12	Lo sar preparation	feed livestock, Lo sar preparation	

AGRICULTURE

Crops are harvested once a year in Sman shod. *Yung ma*, barley, wheat, beans cabbages, radishes, and potatoes are cultivated. Each family has a small plot for vegetables near their home. Crop fields are approximately one kilometer from houses.

In the first Tibetan lunar month,⁵⁴ people are busy with Lo sar festivities that occupy the first to the fifteenth days of the first month. Farmers begin field work after the fifteenth day of the first month. Women pick up stones from the fields and break earth clods for three to four days.

Fields are fertilized from the first day of the second Tibetan lunar month (Figure 60). Human feces and yak dung are collected throughout the year to use as fertilizer in the fields. Yak dung is kept in two separate places – one for summer and one for winter. More yak dung is collected in winter than in summer. All yak dung is used as fertilizer, except that used for fuel. The manure is carried to the fields and spread by both men and women. Before plowing, the yak and *mdzo* used to plow are fed grass and *yung ma* leaves and the yoke, plows, and so on (Figure 61) are prepared.

Fields are plowed with yaks and *mdzo* between the seventh and fifteenth days of the second Tibetan lunar month. Some farmers consult the Tibetan calendar for an appropriate time to begin plowing, harvesting, and planting *yung ma*. Villagers prefer to consult male elders who can make marks on pillars and walls and observe the sun to determine the date. Villagers consider such calculations more accurate and more reliable than calendars and use them when choosing appropriate times.

A ritual on the first day of plowing involves most family members, who wear white or bright colored Tibetan shirts. Barley liquor, butter, *rtsam pa* mixed with butter, and five different grains⁵⁵ are taken to the fields in a basin. The

⁵⁴ Sde dge uses the Tibetan lunar calendar, which differs from the Chinese lunar calendar.

⁵⁵ Barley, wheat, peas, rice, and *gro ma*.

barley liquor and butter are mixed together. Two yaks or *mdzo* with colored ribbons tied on their tails and horns are used. A man burns *bsang*⁵⁶ in the field, then the yak or *mdzo* are led, carrying all the plowing equipment on their shoulders, around the burning *bsang* three times. All participants drink barley liquor mixed with melted butter, eat the *rtsam pa* mixed with butter, and say (Bya bkra rdo rje):

¹ཁ་མྱ་མར་གྱིས་བཀའ་༥

²ལུས་བསོད་ནམས་གྱིས་བཀའ་༥

³ཇམ་གླ་ལས་ཨ་ལ་ཉེ༥

¹A mouth full of flour and butter.

²A body full of good fortune.

³Blessings from the God of Wealth.

The plowman puts a dab of butter on the center of the yak's forehead, dabs butter on each of the yak's horns, and then smears butter all over the horns. People then drink the liquor. The man who will sow the barley seeds gives a short speech expressing the wish that the barley will grow in the coming year (Bya bkra rdo rje):

¹དེ་རིང་གནམ་ལ་བལྟས་ན་སྐར་མ་བཟང་༥

²ས་ལ་བལྟས་ན་དུས་ཚོད་བཟང་༥

³བར་ལ་བལྟས་ན་ཁྲ་གནས་བཟང་༥

⁴བཟང་གསུམ་གྱི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་འགྲིག༥

⁵སྟོད་རྒྱ་གར་རྒྱལ་པོས་འབྲུག་གཡང་བོས༥

⁶སྤང་རྒྱ་ནག་རྒྱལ་པོས་འབྲུག་གཡང་བོས༥

⁷བར་དབུས་གཙང་རི་བཞིས་འབྲུག་གཡང་བོས༥

⁸རྒྱ་ལྗགས་སྟོ་ཅན་གྱིས་འབྲུག་གཡང་བོས༥

⁹བོད་ཤིང་སྟོ་ཅན་གྱིས་འབྲུག་གཡང་བོས༥

¹⁰འབྲུག་གཡང་བོས་བོས༥

⁵⁶ Juniper branches are burnt with grain as an offering to mountain deities or other deities.

- ¹Today is a wonderful day in the sky,
²And a wonderful time on earth.
³The wonderful life-supporting talismans of the middle realm,
⁴Are good omens.
⁵May the King of Upper India have bountiful grain harvests.
⁶May the Emperor of Lower China have bountiful grain harvests.
⁷May the four divisions of Middle Ü-Tsang⁵⁷ have bountiful grain harvests.
⁸May China, with its Iron Gate, have bountiful grain harvests.
⁹May Tibet, with its Wood Gate, have bountiful grain harvests.
¹⁰May there be bountiful grain harvests.

After this short speech, the man tosses barley seeds randomly in the field as another man follows, plowing. The plowman is chosen according to his birth year and the relationship between his zodiac sign and the zodiac sign of that year. The plowman chooses an auspicious direction in which to break the soil for the first time. A woman breaks clods behind the man who plows (Figure 64) while singing. Only men plow fields in the Sman shod area.⁵⁸ A boy or girl leads the two plow animals if one of the livestock is plowing for the first time, but this is not needed if the plow animals are already trained to walk straight.⁵⁹ Plowmen plow the field in parallel lines, saying, "oM ma Ni pad+me hUM," at the end of the furrow as they turn and go back.

The following plowing song is high pitched and the rhythm is slow, irregular, and simple. Many people only

⁵⁷ Tibet is divided into Dbus gtsang, A mdo, and Khams. Locals could not explain what the four regions of Dbus gtsang are.

⁵⁸ Locals could not explain this custom.

⁵⁹ This varies according to the location in the Sman shod Valley. A boy or a girl may lead the plow animals in the upper part of the valley (Phu ma Township) but this is less common in the lower part of the valley (Mda' ma Township).

knew the vocables of this song in 2010. Below are the only song lyrics I was able to collect (Bya bkra rdo rje):

¹ ཨ་སྒ་ཡོ་ཡོ།

² ཁྱོད་གཡང་བདག་གཉིས། ཨ་སྒ་ཡོ་ཡོ།

³ ཁྱོད་ཇམ་གླ་ལས་འཛོ་རྒྱ། ཨ་སྒ་ཡོ་ཡོ།

⁴ ཁྱོད་གཡང་གིས་འཛོ་རྒྱ། ཨ་སྒ་ཡོ་ཡོ།

⁵ ཁྱོད་གོང་མ་རྣས་འཛོ་རྒྱ། ཨ་སྒ་ཡོ་ཡོ།

⁶ ཁྱོད་འབྲ་དྲང་ཐུག་གིས་འཛོ་རྒྱ། ཨ་སྒ་ཡོ་ཡོ།

⁷ ཁྱོད་ལྷ་བྱ་ངང་བས་འཛོ་རྒྱ། ཨ་སྒ་ཡོ་ཡོ།

⁸ རྩོམ་གཡང་འཁོར་ནས་འགོ། ཨ་སྒ་ཡོ་ཡོ།

⁹ ཨ་སྒ་ཡོ་ཡོ།

¹ *A sga yo yo.*

² You two, the keepers of good fortune, *a sga yo yo.*

³ Shall be nurtured by the God of Wealth, *a sga yo yo.*

⁴ Shall be nurtured by good fortune, *a sga yo yo.*

⁵ Shall be nurtured by the heavenly deities, *a sga yo yo.*

⁶ Shall be nurtured by sea snails, *a sga yo yo.*

⁷ Shall be nurtured by heavenly geese, *a sga yo yo.*

⁸ And prosperity shall prevail, *a sga yo yo.*

⁹ *A sga yo yo.*

They repeat this song, encouraging the livestock and passing the work time joyfully. When they finish plowing, the man removes the yoke from the animals and gives a short speech (Bya bkra rdo rje):

¹ གསེར་གྱི་ཀ་བ་ཁྱོས་ཁྱོགས།

² དདུལ་གྱི་ཀ་བ་ངས་འགྲོག།

³ ཨ་རྒྱ་བ་རྒྱ་སྒྲུབ་བ་དག།

⁴ ལྷགས་ཚན་དུ་འཕྱར་ས་དོས་ལ།

⁵ སྒོར་སྒོར་དུ་བྱེད་སྒོར་བ་ལ་འགྱུར།

⁶ ཆོ་ཡོ་ཡོ་ཅི་བེར་མ་ནི་འགྱུར།

⁷ མ་ཅི་ཅི་བེར་ཐུན་མོང་འགྱུར།

⁸མྱ་མཛོ་ར་རིགས་གི་ལྷས་མ་ལེན།

⁹བྱ་ནག་གཅམ་པའི་ལྷས་མ་ལེན།

¹⁰བྱུ་ནག་མཆིལ་པའི་ལྷས་མ་ལེན།

¹¹འབྲུ་ནག་འབྲུ་རྒྱུ་གི་ལྷས་མ་ལེན།

¹²དབྱས་རྩ་སའི་གསེར་ཁང་གང་མ་ལ།

¹³དགེ་སློང་ཡང་དག་ཅིག་གི་ལྷས་ལེན་པར་ཤོག།

¹You hoist the golden post,

²And I will hoist the silver post.

³The harness on the yoke cleanses sin.

⁴Every lash of the whip taken by the earth and stones,

⁵Every turn, becomes one circumambulation.

⁶Every *yo yo*⁶⁰ becomes *ma Ni*,

⁷And every *ma Ni* is shared with you.⁶¹

⁸Do not become a plow *mdzo* in your next reincarnation.

⁹Do not become a black crow in your next reincarnation.

¹⁰Do not become a small black robin in your next reincarnation.

¹¹Do not become a black stink bug in your next reincarnation.

¹²At the Gser khang gang ma⁶² of Lha sa,

¹³Become an excellent *bla ma* instead.

The plowing ritual is complete after this speech and people return home and eat. Men who plow do not return home for meals during the day, instead, their family members bring them food and fodder for the plow animals.

A family with around fifteen *rmog*⁶³ of fields needs five to nine days to plow.

Yung ma is sown after barley. The *yung ma* fields are plowed again several days before sowing. The same fields are plowed after several days and the clods broken again. One person sows *yung ma* seed and another pulls a harrow to

⁶⁰ A vocable used to urge livestock to move.

⁶¹ Addressed to the plowing *mdzo*.

⁶² A local name for the Jo khang, Lha sa's most sacred temple.

⁶³ *Rmog* – two thirds of an acre.

cover the seeds and level the field. After *yung ma* is sown and the barley shoots are ten to fifteen centimeters high (about two months later) the earth around the barley shoots is loosened with a hoe. Women weed the fields five to ten days later. Weeding (locally called *skya yu*) may be done only once a year or whenever women have free time.

Women loosen earth around the *yung ma* five or ten days after finishing *skya yu*. This is done more carefully and takes more time than in the barley fields – around ten days. The earth is again loosened and weeds removed half a month later. This is called *yung yu*. The earth in barley and *yung ma* fields is loosened in the fifth and sixth lunar months.

Prior to harvest, people cut *sog*, which is specially planted fodder, for five to ten days. Although it is presently used only for livestock, *sog* was historically eaten by people during times of hardship. *Mgur ma* are sung at this time antiphonally between two people or groups of people. Such songs may be sung by anyone but are mostly sung by youths while cutting grass in autumn (Figure 66). This is the first and most time-consuming task in autumn. People start and end the harvest by cutting grass (Figures 64 and 65). The time spent cutting grass depends on a household's number of old and weak livestock that must be fed during winter.

A family typically asks several people to help when they cut grass. When the cutting is finished, the family reciprocates by assisting those who helped them. Most helpers are friends and relatives.

When one person or group sings *mgur ma*, the other side listens and considers how to reply. The two groups or two people sing antiphonally continuously while working. One song takes around one minute and if one group cannot reply, they are scorned.

Mgur ma may indicate love for or may insult their opponent. The lyrics are sometimes very insulting, but at other times show love, respect, or praise. Dislike and affection are never expressed directly through normal everyday verbal interchange; *mgur ma* allow for a more direct expression of feelings.

All *mgur ma* melodies are the same; only the lyrics differ, as they are constantly improvised. People often use

mgur mo lyrics. *Mgur ma* employ various melodies. Below are *mgur ma* lyrics (Bo nyed):

¹ཨ་ལ་ལོ་ཡ་ཡོ་ཡོ་ལེ་ཡ་ལ་ཡོ་ལེ།

²ཨ་ལ་ལོ་ཟེ་གོ།

³ཨ་ལ་ལོ་ཡ་ཡོ་ལེ་ཡོ།

⁴འོ་ལ་ལཱ་ཕྱེ་ལེ་ཡ་འོ་ལེ།

⁵དར་རྒྱ་རས་ཁ་གང་མེད་དེ།

⁶དཀར་མེད་གུར་ནང་ཡོད་འགོ།

⁷རྒྱ་ཇ་བབ་ཀག་མེད་དེ།

⁸སྟོང་ཇ་ལག་ལེན་བྱེད་འགོ།

¹*A la lo ya yo yo le ya la yo le*⁶⁴

²*A la lo ze go*

³*A la lo ya yo le yo*

⁴*'o la phyo le ya 'o le*

⁵Though I lack a piece of cloth,

⁶I live in a white tent.

⁷Though I lack a brick of tea,

⁸I own a thousand leaves of tea.

The lyrics of another *mgur ma* follow (Bo nyed):

¹ངའི་མི་ལུས་སྟོང་སྟུང་ཉག་མ་འདི།

²དུས་དང་སང་སྟོང་སྟུང་ཉག་མ་ཡིན།

³སང་པན་ཆད་ད་རེས་དུས་ཆོད་ལ།

⁴ང་མི་འགྱུར་འཁྲལ་མེད་ཡིན་པ་རེད།

¹My life is hanging by a thread,

²And is very fragile right now.

³Hereafter,

⁴My circumstances will not change.

⁶⁴ These four lines are vocables sung with the same melody as the remaining *mgur ma*.

¹རི་འགོ་མཐོ་ལ་མ་བལྟས།

²རི་དབུ་བཟང་ལ་བལྟས་ཡོད།

³ཆུང་འབྲིས་སྒྲིས་ལ་མ་བལྟས།

⁴གཤིས་རྒྱུད་བཟང་ལ་བལྟས་ཡོད།

¹The mountain's height is unimportant,

²But the mountain's auspicious nature is important.

³My lover's appearance is unimportant.

⁴But her good personality is important.

¹ཕ་རི་སྟག་པ་འགྲུལ་འགྲུལ།

²ཆུ་རི་སྒྲང་མ་འགྲུལ་འགྲུལ།

³མགུ་ན་ཕར་འགྲུལ་ཆུར་འགྲུལ།

⁴མ་འགྲུལ་རང་རང་སོ་སོ།

¹Yonder⁶⁵ birch trees nod their heads,

²And the willows here⁶⁶ follow suit.

³Trees on both sides sway,

⁴If motionless, they have nothing in common.

¹ཆུང་འབྲིས་ཁྱོད་ལ་ཅི་གོས།

²ང་ལ་འདི་གོས་ཀྱིས་ཤོག།

³ནམ་མཁའི་སྐར་ཚོགས་ཡིན་ན།

⁴སྤྲིན་གྱི་སྐས་ཤིག་འཇུག་ཆོག།

¹Lover, what do you want?

²Just tell me what you desire.

³If it is the stars in the sky,

⁴I'll make a ladder of clouds for you.

¹ཕ་རི་སྒྲང་ཁོའི་སྤྱོད་ལ།

²བ་ཤན་རྩ་བ་ཅེས་བྱུང་།

³ཞག་གསུམ་བ་ཡོང་མ་བྱུང་།

⁶⁵ *Pha ri* – see footnote twenty-six.

⁶⁶ *Tshu ri* refers to the side of the valley where the speaker is standing.

⁴ཐུང་ཁ་རྩེ་བའི་རྩེ་བའི་ཐུང་།

¹On yonder pasture,

²Grazes an old cow.

³After eating for three days,

⁴She fouls the pasture with her manure.

Fodder is dried in the sun after it is cut, bundled in the afternoon (Figure 69), and then carried to nearby trees. If there is much fodder, it may be attached to wooden posts on a tree. Fodder may be taken to trees on the mountain because trees are lacking in the valley near the fields. A person climbs the tree and those below toss up bundles, which are then secured to the tree (Figure 71). The fodder thus dries and does not rot. Those who toss bundles into the trees count rhythmically and loudly.

Harvest begins in the seventh month. Families in the lower part of the valley start first. An auspicious date is chosen by someone who reads and understands the Tibetan almanac, is knowledgeable, and is experienced in farm work. Sometimes the lucky day falls ten days before the crops are ready to harvest: the chosen people go to the field, cut one or three stalks of barley and then return home, having begun the harvest on an auspicious day.

The harvest begins if the barley is yellow, feels dry, and is hard to the touch. Barley may freeze on a cloudless night, and then it cannot be eaten by people. It becomes livestock fodder and a year's work is ruined. Barley is harvested with sickles beginning in the morning. It is cut from the lower part of the field to the upper part and then bound into bundles.

Once cut, the barley is bound into bundles, strapped to the back, and taken to homes where it is stored in one or two rooms. A large wooden rack on top of the house may also be used to hang the bundles to dry (Figure 74). Certain families have two or three racks for drying barley. After harvesting all the barley, the fields are revisited by old people and children who glean barley that fell from the stalks while harvesting. They heap the dropped barley together, roll it into balls tied with straw, and hang it in the storeroom.

A la are sung antiphonally between two people or two groups while harvesting. There are few restrictions on who may sing *a la* and the context in which they are sung. Groups may be mixed gender and composed of people from the same family or village. Such songs are mostly sung by youths.

A la is a vocable. No one could explain the meaning of the name or the origins of *a la*. The lyrics of *a la* have no real meaning (Bo nyed):

¹ཨ་ལ་ལེ་ཡག་ཉི་མ་ཡ་ལ་ཟེར།

¹*A la* the day of good harvest *ya la zer*.

Singing begins with reaping. When one group or one person sings *a la*, another person or group sings back, meaning they accept the challenge to compete. The competition consists of singing *a la* and determining which group is more diligent. The groups might be two villages, families, or groups of friends.

The two competing groups do not rest until they finish one field. When one side sings, the other side listens and sings when the other finishes. They usually repeat the song that was sung by the other person or group.

A la last about three minutes.⁶⁷ After one group sings, about five seconds pass before the other group sings. *A la* have a narrow dynamic range, low pitch range, and the rhythm is slow, irregular, and simple. The timbre is warm. *A la* are considered helpful in harvesting barley quickly and easily, and in dispelling boredom and tiredness. Harvesting is the busiest time of year. Continuation of grass cutting immediately follows the barley harvest. Work is outside in the heat for prolonged periods and housework must be done at the end of the day. *A la* ease the burden of such work.

When all the barley is harvested, villagers cut grass near the fields and on field borders, which requires at least one month. More time is required for families with more livestock. After grass close to the houses and fields is cut,

⁶⁷ The same line is repeated, though *mgur mo* lyrics may also be used.

villagers go to mountains to cut grass there. *Mu rtswa* refers to grass near fields, and *ri rtswa* refers to grass collected from mountains.

Villagers begin harvesting *yung ma* from their fields in the eighth month (Figure 75). *Yung ma* is taken from the fields to the house in one day. All villagers harvest *yung ma* on the same day. Livestock are allowed into the fields the following day to eat remaining *yung ma*. Those unable to finish collecting *yung ma* during the day continue into the night. Some families harvest *yung ma* during the night prior to the approved time in fear that they will be unable to collect it all in one day. The owner cannot ask for compensation if village livestock eat *yung ma* after this time. Therefore villagers forbid the collecting of *yung ma* prior to the date agreed to by all the villagers.⁶⁸ If village leaders notice a family clandestinely harvesting *yung ma* they threaten them with a fine of 500 to 1,000 RMB, though such fines are never actually levied.

At home the *yung ma* leaves are cut off (Figure 76), dried in the sun, rolled up, and hung on a tree. *Yung ma* roots are put on a wood platform on the edge of the house. The roots are divided into two groups – good and bad *yung ma*. Tubers with a thin 'tail' and fewer leaves are considered good *yung ma* because they are sweeter. Those with a thick tail and more leaves are considered bad *yung ma*. 'Good' *yung ma* are for human consumption. They are sundried and cooked with noodles or *rtsam pa* and may also be boiled fresh in water and eaten. People also eat *yung ma* raw during summer. Most *yung ma* are livestock feed.

Villagers begin to thresh barley in the ninth month on a threshing ground that is cleaned beforehand. Some families use their roof as a threshing ground and others use their courtyard. The ground is swept. Red earth brought from nearby mountains is mixed with fresh yak dung and water. The yak dung helps the red earth stick to the ground. The mixture is put on the ground and flattened with a *sbyag pa*.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Village leaders hold a meeting to discuss the date with villagers.

⁶⁹ *Sbyag pa* refers to a wood (or sometimes metal) harrow.

Chaff is spread on the ground, and hit gently with a besom to mesh the chaff with the mud. After two or three days the mud has dried and threshing barley may begin.

The barley bundles are taken into the sun. Both men and women (mostly women) use a simple wooden stick to strike the head and dislodge the grain. The stalks are then kept as fodder for winter.

A la phyo are sung antiphonally between two people or two groups of people when threshing. The restrictions of *a la phyo* are the same as with *a la*, the cutting fodder song.

Threshers use sticks to beat the barley ears on the ground (Figures 78 to 80). Next, they sing *a la phyo* while rolling the stick backward and forward on the barley grain on the ground to separate the husks from the barley grain (Figures 81 and 82).

A la phyo singers divide into two groups, which may be mixed gender and consist of family members or villagers, and sing antiphonally while threshing with flails. The lyrics are improvised while the melody remains constant.

The lyrics of *a la phyo* introduce and praise the threshing tools and also describe the threshing ground and the threshers (Figure 83). The lyrics are sometimes very insulting, but at other times express praise, for example by suggesting that one's opponents are working energetically. One group starts and the other group repeats what the first group sang.

A la phyo songs are about three minutes long. After one group has sung, about five seconds elapse before the other side sings. The melodies of *a la phyo* follow the threshing rhythm.

Threshing took about one month historically and *a la phyo* were sung every day. Straw was separated from the grain from morning to afternoon and again in the evening.

The genre's origin is unknown. Only one or two people in Sman shod could still sing such songs well in 2010. Fewer than ten people could sing only the *a la phyo* introduction, which praises the tools but were unable to improvise lyrics. No youths in Sman shod could sing *a la phyo*, and some had never heard of *a la phyo*. Below are lyrics to an *a la phyo* (Bo nyed):

¹ཨ་ལ་ལོ་ཨ་ལིས་ལོ་ཡག་ཡོ་ཕྱོ་ལེ།

²གཡུག་སྒོར་ཅན་དན་སྒྲིང་བོ་(ཕྱོ)།

¹*A la lo a los lo yag phyo le*

²The flail is made of sandalwood, *phyo*.

³ཨ་ལ་ལོ་ཨ་ལིས་ལོ་ཡག་ཡོ་ཕྱོ་ལེ།

⁴གཡུག་མདའ་མདའ་སྐྱུག་སྒོར་མ་(ཕྱོ)།

³*A la lo a los lo yag phyo le*

⁴The flail is made of bamboo, *phyo*.

⁵ཨ་ལ་ལོ་ཨ་ལིས་ལོ་ཡག་ཡོ་ཕྱོ་ལེ།

⁶གཡུག་རྒྱ་འབྲི་གོ་སིང་མ་(ཕྱོ)།

⁵*A la lo a los lo yag phyo le*

⁶The line binding the flail is made from wild yak skin, *phyo*.

⁷ཨ་ལ་ལོ་ཨ་ལིས་ལོ་ཡག་ཡོ་ཕྱོ་ལེ།

⁸དངང་ལོ་ར་ལག་གཡས་བ་(ཕྱོ)།

⁷*A la lo a los lo yag phyo le*

⁸The pegs joining the flail are made from the bones of a goat's right foreleg, *phyo*.

⁹ཨ་ལ་ལོ་ཨ་ལིས་ལོ་ཡག་ཡོ་ཕྱོ་ལེ།

¹⁰གཡུག་རྒྱ་འབྲུ་གན་ལྔ་ལྔ་(ཕྱོ)།

⁹*A la lo a los lo yag phyo le*

¹⁰What we are threshing are the five grains, *phyo*.

¹¹ཨ་ལ་ལོ་ཨ་ལིས་ལོ་ཡག་ཡོ་ཕྱོ་ལེ།

¹²གཡུག་མི་བྱ་ཆ་བྱ་མོ་(ཕྱོ)།

¹¹*A la lo a los lo yag phyo le*

¹²The threshers are sons, nephews, and nieces, *phyo*.

¹³ཨ་ལ་ལོ་ཨ་ལིས་ལོ་ཡག་ཡོ་ཕྱོ་ལེ།

¹⁴གཡུག་གནས་ཀླན་དགའ་ར་བ་(ཕྱོ)།

¹³*A la lo a los lo yag phyo le*

¹⁴The place where we are threshing is a threshing ground,

phyo.

After the barley on the ground is flailed, the grain is taken to a place where wind frequently blows. Winnowed barley is placed in threshing trays and sifted to remove stones and stalk fragments. Women remove trash from the tray.

In the eleventh and twelfth months, yak dung from grasslands and wood from forests are collected. Women collect yak dung and a bundle of dried wood in the morning while putting livestock out to pasture and again in the evening when bringing livestock back. Each family cuts and collects wood for a day. The family often asks friends or relatives for help, forming a group of ten to fifteen men and one woman to go to nearby forests. They leave in the morning and return in the evening. The woman takes food, makes tea, and prepares meals.

Crop rotation is practiced. *Yung ma* and beans are planted to restore a field cultivated with barley the year before. Barley is planted the following year. A field in which *yung ma* or peas were grown the previous year is called *snu zhing* 'fat field' because soil fertility is replenished during this year. Growing and harvesting *yung ma* requires much labor so fields are occasionally allowed to lie fallow.

Farmland may be rented out in two situations. Certain families with large farmlands may lack enough people-power to cultivate. Alternatively, farming may be considered too difficult, and some family members may go to the county town to work for wages. Those who rent fields pay half the barley and fodder to the land owner.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Figure 60.

Dung is transported using baskets made by village women. February 2010.

Figure 61.

Yaks pull such plows. Plows are dismantled in winter for storage and maintenance. This plow is without its metal blade, which fits in the hole to the left. February 2010.

Figure 62.

A 'Bol yul villager plows a *sog* field. August 2010.

Figure 63.

A child does not need to lead these *mdzo*. Instead the plowman use two long reigns to steer the *mdzo* around the end of the field as he sings '*oM ma Ni pad+me hUM*' as he turns the plow. August 2010.

Figure 64.

Dpar sgron demonstrates clod-breaking. Clods are broken prior to planting before fields are plowed the second time. February 2010.

Figure 65.

Scythe blades with shallower curves (all but the nearest) are used to harvest grass. Scythe blades with pronounced curves are used by women to cut barley. One household may have five to ten scythes. October 2009.

Figure 66.

Ci jo villagers harvest barley and *sog* to the east of Rtsis thog Village. August 2010.

Figure 67.

A local woman harvests grass from a field that was reclaimed as part of government policy to convert fields to forests. August 2010.

Figure 68.

Harvesters rest and eat lunch before continuing to collect *sog*. August 2010.

Figure 69.

This woman pointed behind me as she twisted a rope of *sog* and said, "We put the *sog* on the trees on that

mountain." August 2010.

Figure 70.

A local woman harvests peas that were eaten by villagers in the past but more recently are used for fodder. August 2010.

Figure 71.

Twisted bundles of *sog* are stored in a wooden frame around a tree. The man throws bundles up to a helper standing inside the frame who counts melodiously as he collects the bundles. August 2010.

Figure 72.

Sog and grass are stored on wooden frames near the Sman chu River. October 2009.

Figure 73.

Dpar sgron demonstrates cutting barley with a sickle. October 2009.

Figure 74.

Barley dries on a wooden drying frame on a roof before threshing time. October 2009.

Figure 75.

A villager harvests *yung ma*. The tubers and leaves are cooked and eaten, although tubers may be eaten raw. October 2009.

Figure 76.

Tshong lha mo separates *yung ma* leaves from the tubers. Leaves and tubers will be dried. The hair decoration wrapped around her head is an everyday ornament. October 2009.

Figure 77.

Children help transport *yung ma* home to be sundried for three to twelve months. October 2009.

Figure 78.

Women thresh barley in autumn. October 2009.

Figure 79.

Bo krug inspects a bundle of barley to see if any grain remains on the stalks. October 2009.

Figure 80

Dpar sgron knocks barley grain from the stalks with a stick. October 2009.

Figure 81.

Village women thresh peas in a courtyard. Each woman is from a different household in the neighborhood. December 2010.

Figure 82.

Villagers usually thresh in two groups. The groups sing antiphonally as they beat the pea stalks rhythmically with sticks. December 2010.

Figure 83.

G.yugs skor are threshing tools that are praised in threshing songs. October 2009.



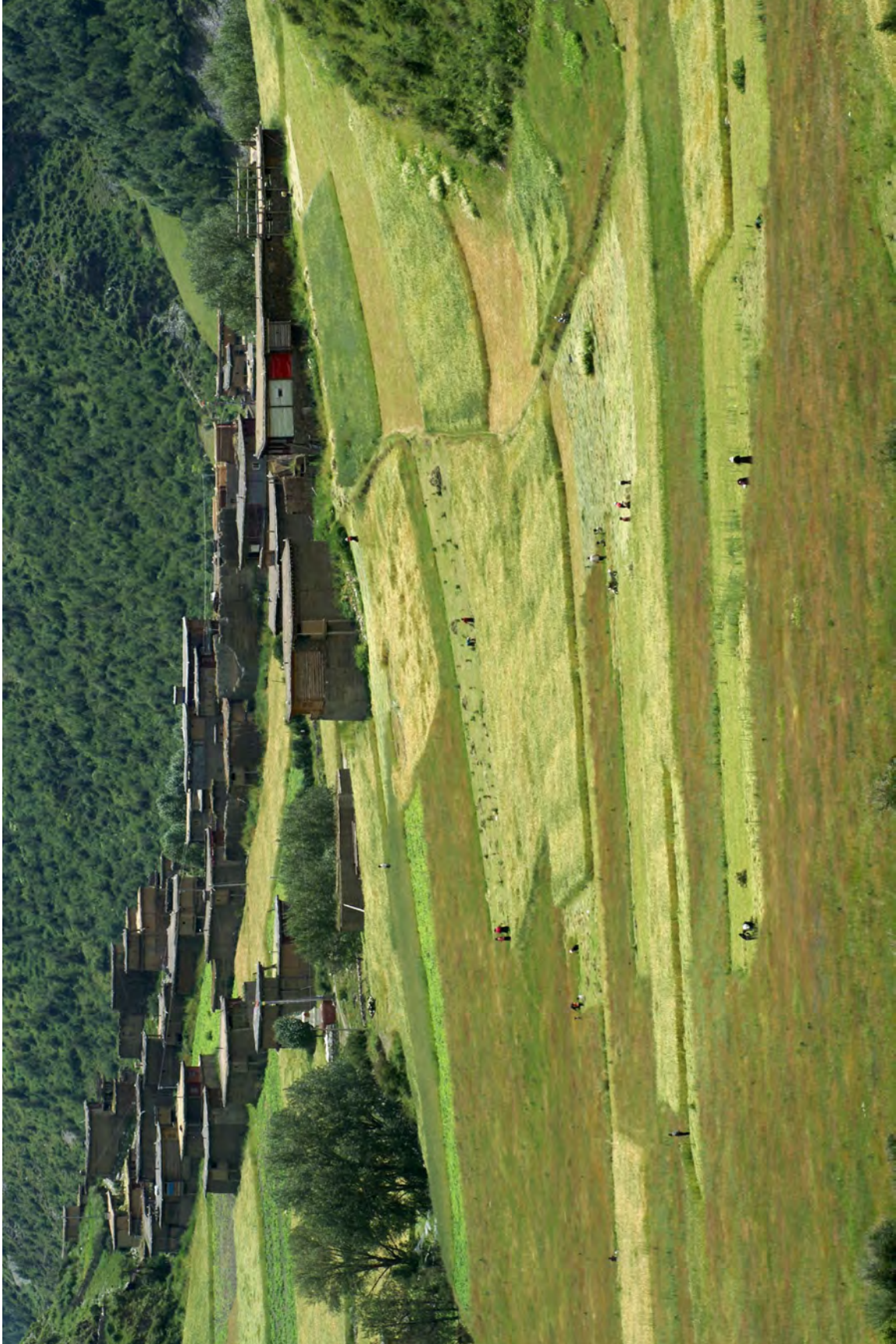














































HERDING

There are both agro-pastoralists and full-time herders in Sman shod. Full-time herders have about 100 yaks and move four times a year between *yus ba* 'winter houses', *dbyar ri* 'summer pastures', and *ston ri* or *dpyid ri* 'autumn or spring pastures' (the fall and spring pasture are in the same location). Most herding families have a cottage at each pasture. Yaks, *mdzo mo*, horses, sheep, and goats are herded. Families with more than 100 yaks usually lack *mdzo mo*. If they do have *mdzo mo* they are kept at the winter house in the belief they fare better at lower altitudes. Certain herders own no sheep and goats while others have fifty to 200. Almost every herding family has one or two horses, but the number of such families is rapidly decreasing. Full-time herders have more than two people who spend most of their time on the mountains with the livestock and who do no farm work.

The majority of herders in Sman shod are agro-pastoralists and have ten to forty yaks and *mdzo mo*; some also have twenty to fifty sheep and goats. Such herders only move twice a year from their winter houses to the summer pasture, where one or two people are sent. These people must also return to the winter house in the farming village to work on a daily basis.

Agro-pastoralists who have a few *mdzo mo* or cows do not move. Yaks produce the best milk, followed by *mdzo mo* and cows, whereas cows produce the most milk, followed by *mdzo mo* and yaks.

Agro-pastoralists and herders are busy with Lo sar in the first Tibetan lunar month. Herders are in their winter house with their families and milk every evening, though yaks give little milk at this time. Some good *ya ma* 'livestock that gave birth in the previous year' have a little milk. The weak, old, and young yaks are fed dry grass. Sometimes weak pregnant yaks are also fed. Agro-pastoralists feed livestock fodder from the eleventh Tibetan lunar month to the second Tibetan lunar month. Full-time pastoralists move to spring pasture late in the first Tibetan lunar month. The spring pasture's elevation is higher than the winter house but

lower than the summer pasture.

Most sheep have been pregnant for five months by the second Tibetan lunar month. Herders do not milk sheep. Yaks have little milk at this time. Old and young yaks and *mdzo mo* are fed dry grass or *yung ma*. Agro-pastoral families remain in their winter homes sowing barley and plowing *yung ma* and bean fields.

In early spring in the third Tibetan lunar month, yak, *mdzo mo*, and cows begin birthing. A typical full-time herding family has twenty to thirty yak calves while agro-pastoral families have five to ten *mdzo mo* or yak calves. Full-time herders feed weak yak mothers, though they may not feed them the entire winter. Herders do not milk yaks after they give birth because the calves are not strong enough to eat grass; their life depends solely on their mother's milk. This is the hardest time for herders because little dry grass remains from the long winter feeding. Livestock are weak and the weakest may die from starvation if the fodder is exhausted before new grass emerges.

New grass appears in the fourth Tibetan lunar month. Herders no longer feed the livestock. Milk of the *ya ma*, *mdzo mo*, and cows increases. The herders begin milking the *mdzo mo* and cows because they were fed dry grass in winter and therefore produce more milk, though it is low in fat. Most yaks are usually not fed during winter because the family cannot offer sufficient fodder for all their livestock. The mother of the *to le* 'hybrid of a cow and a *mdzo mo*' are milked at this time because such animals are not valued as they provide little milk, and it is therefore not worrisome if *to le* starve to death due to their mother being milked. At this time, herders milk the livestock twice a day – in the morning before sending them out to pasture on the mountains and in the evening when they return.

New grass grows tall on the mountain slopes in the fifth Tibetan lunar month. Agro-pastoral families move to their summer pasture from their winter house after *skya yu* 'weeding' at the beginning of this month, and full-time herders move up to summer pasture from spring pasture. Yak calves become stronger from their mothers' milk as it becomes richer from the rich grass. Mother yaks are milked.

Agro-pastoral families who lack man-power send members back to their winter house to help loosen earth for planting *yung ma*.

All herders are on their highest pasture – the summer pasture – in the sixth Tibetan lunar month that marks the beginning of the milking season. Milking is done three times a day. Herdswomen wake up at around three a.m., milk all the yaks, and then go with them to the pasture near their house. At around seven or eight a.m., they return home with the herd to milk them again and then pasture them much farther from the house. After the livestock have returned in the evening from their day in the pasture they are milked again. A full-time herding family usually has two people to milk thirty to forty *ya ma* and mother yaks. Agro-pastoral families only require one person to milk ten to fifteen yaks or *mdzo mo*.

Milking songs are sung by women when milking (Figures 93-97). Men usually do not milk, but if a full-time herding family lacks females able to milk, a man may do so. Milking songs are sung to a female yak or *mdzo mo* that has had a calf for the first time during the first year of the calf's life. *Thul ma*⁷⁰ are difficult to milk. They are undomesticated and frequently kick women, break their tether, and flee. Even if the animal is hobbled, it may buck and not let the woman milk. Women sing to tame the *thul ma*. There are no titles for milking songs.

I recorded two milking songs. The tunes are slightly different while the lyrics are completely different. One song is four minutes and thirty seconds long and the other is one minute long; there are only ten lines in the short milking song. Below are the lyrics to the longer milking song (Bo nyed):

¹ཨ་ཐུལ་ཐུལ་དཀར་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

²ཐུལ་ལེ་གཡང་ཁ་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

³ཡར་སྐྱེས་གསེར་གྱི་ར་ཅོ་སྦྱར་ཅན་བཞོ་བཞོ།

⁷⁰ *Thul ma* refers to livestock that have given birth for the first time.

⁴མར་སྟེས་དངུལ་གྱི་མིག་ཆུང་ཅན་བཞོ་བཞོ།

¹Milk the white *thul ma*.

²Milk the spotted *thul ma*.

³Milk the golden-horned adult, *bzho*, *bzho*.⁷¹

⁴Milk the silver-hoofed adult, *bzho*, *bzho*.

⁵ཨ་ཐུལ་ཐུལ་དཀར་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

⁶ཐུལ་ལེ་གཡང་ཁ་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

⁷གནམ་ལ་ཡར་འཕགས་གསེར་གྱི་རྩ་ཙྰ་འབལ་ལེ་རེད་བཞོ་བཞོ།

⁸ས་ལ་མར་འཕགས་དངུལ་གྱི་མིག་པ་འབལ་ལེ་རེད་བཞོ་བཞོ།

⁵Milk the white *thul ma*.

⁶Milk the spotted *thul ma*.

⁷Do not jump into the sky or your golden horns will fall off, *bzho*, *bzho*.

⁸Do not jump on the ground or your silvery hoofs will fall off, *bzho*, *bzho*.

⁹ཨ་ཐུལ་ཐུལ་དཀར་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

¹⁰ཐུལ་ལེ་གཡང་ཁ་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

¹¹མིག་གཟི་ཆུང་སྟག་ལྟག་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

¹²ནྟ་གཤོག་སྒྲུ་ཆུང་དྲེལ་འདྲ་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

⁹Milk the white *thul ma*.

¹⁰Milk the spotted *thul ma*.

¹¹Milk the pearly-eyed one, *bzho*, *bzho*.

¹²Milk the one with foal's ears, *bzho*, *bzho*.

¹³ཨ་ཐུལ་ཐུལ་དཀར་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

¹⁴ཐུལ་ལེ་གཡང་ཁ་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

¹⁵མཚང་ར་འོ་བཟང་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

¹⁶རྩ་མ་རྩ་ཆུང་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

¹³Milk the white *thul ma*.

¹⁴Milk the spotted *thul ma*.

¹⁵Milk the one with pelvic bones full of milk, *bzho*, *bzho*.

⁷¹ This vocable also means 'to milk'.

¹⁶Milk the one with a tail like a poplar tree branch, *bzho*,
bzho.

¹⁷ཨ་ཐུལ་ཐུལ་དཀར་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

¹⁸ཐུལ་ལེ་གཡང་ཁ་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

¹⁹བཞོ་སྒྲིབ་གསེར་ཟོ་ཕ་མོ་བཟེད་ནས་བཞོ་བཞོ།

²⁰གཡུག་ཐག་དར་ཚོན་སྒྲ་ལྷས་བརྒྱན་ནས་བཞོ་བཞོ།

¹⁷Milk the white *thul ma*.

¹⁸Milk the spotted *thul ma*.

¹⁹Milk it into the golden milk pail, *bzho*, *bzho*.

²⁰Use the five-colored silk hobble, *bzho*, *bzho*.

²¹ཨ་ཐུལ་ཐུལ་དཀར་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

²²ཐུལ་ལེ་གཡང་ཁ་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

²³རི་ལ་བཏང་ན་རི་རྒྱང་ཡོད་བཞོ་བཞོ།

²⁴ནང་ལ་བཏགས་ན་གདང་(རྒྱང་)སྒྲིག་ཡོད་བཞོ་བཞོ།

²¹Milk the white *thul ma*.

²²Milk the spotted *thul ma*.

²³The mountain will be adorned if I let you out to pasture,
bzho, *bzho*.

²⁴The hobble will be adorned if I tie you here, *bzho*, *bzho*.

²⁵ཨ་ཐུལ་ཐུལ་དཀར་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

²⁶ཐུལ་ལེ་གཡང་ཁ་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

²⁷མར་བརྒྱ་འཕེལ་ལེ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

²⁸བྱ་སྟོང་འཕེལ་ལེ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

²⁵Milk the white *thul ma*.

²⁶Milk the spotted *thul ma*.

²⁷Milk the one with a hundred measures of butter, *bzho*,
bzho.

²⁸Milk the one with a thousand-fold offspring, *bzho*, *bzho*.

²⁹ཨ་ཐུལ་ཐུལ་དཀར་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

³⁰ཐུལ་ལེ་གཡང་ཕ་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

³¹གཡང་གིས་སྤང་རྒྱུ་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

³²དག་རྒྱ་གྱིས་ཐོང་ལ་མ་རྒྱག་བཞོ་བཞོ།

²⁹Milk the white *thul ma*.

³⁰Milk the spotted *thul ma*.

³¹Milk the one protected by good fortune, *bzho*, *bzho*.

³²Milk the one that cannot be stolen or killed, *bzho*, *bzho*.

³³ཨ་ཐུལ་ཐུལ་དཀར་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

³⁴ཐུལ་ལེ་གཡང་ཁ་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

³⁵གཅན་གཟན་གྱི་ཁ་ཁྲེ་མ་འཕེན་བཞོ་བཞོ།

³³Milk the white *thul ma*.

³⁴Milk the spotted *thul ma*.

³⁵Milk the one that cannot be killed by animals, *bzho*, *bzho*.

³⁶ཨ་ཐུལ་ཐུལ་དཀར་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

³⁷ཐུལ་ལེ་གཡང་ཁ་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

³⁸མར་བརྒྱ་འཕེལ་ལེ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

³⁹བྱ་བརྒྱ་འཕེལ་ལེ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

³⁶Milk the white *thul ma*.

³⁷Milk the spotted *thul ma*.

³⁸Milk the one with a hundred measures of butter, *bzho*, *bzho*.

³⁹Milk the one with a thousand-fold offspring, *bzho*, *bzho*.

The woman ties the yak-calf in front of its mother, gently touches and pats the mother, combs the mother's hair with her fingers, and brushes away dust from the belly hair. All the while, she says such kind words as, "*Ngas g.yang bdag khyod* You are responsible for my prosperity," to the mother yak in a quiet, gentle voice. She squats by the yak's right flank and ties the yak's hind legs together with yak hair rope. The mother yak begins to struggle almost immediately. The woman stands, and touches and pats the yak gently. She combs the hair between the yak's horns with her fingers. She then squats on the right side of the mother yak with her milking pail and begins to sing a milking song (*Sgron g.yang*):

¹མ་སྤུལ་སྤུལ་དཀར་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

²སྤུལ་ལེ་གཡང་ཁ་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

³འོ་མའི་རྒྱ་མཚོ་བཞོ།

⁴བཞོན་བཞོ་མི་ཤེས་ན་གསེར་ཚོ་ཁ་ལ་འདུག།

⁵བྱ་འཁྲིད་མི་ཤེས་ན་འབྲི་བརྒྱའི་གདང་ལ་ཤོག།

⁶རྩ་ཟ་མི་ཤེས་ན་རི་རྒྱལ་རྩེ་ལ་ཤོག།

⁷རྒྱ་འཁྱུང་མི་ཤེས་ན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་ཁ་ལ་ཤོག།

⁸བཞོ་བཞོ་སྤུལ་མ་བཞོ་བཞོ།

¹Milk the white *thul ma*, *bzho*, *bzho*.

²Milk the spotted *thul ma*.

³Milk the one that has a sea of milk, *bzho*, *bzho*.

⁴If you do not know how to milk, sit on the golden milking pail.

⁵If you do not know how to lead your baby, go to the hundredfold yak's *gdang*.⁷²

⁶If you do not know how to eat grass, come to the peak of Mt. Meru.

⁷If you do not know how to drink water, come to the sea.

⁸Milk, milk the *thul ma*, *bzho*, *bzho*.

Locals consider cows more docile than yaks, thus the lyrics compare the *thul ma* to a cow in the hope that it will be more manageable.

When the woman begins singing, the *thul ma* quiets, listens to the song, and licks her calf tied in front of her. The woman finishes milking, unties the calf, and moves to another yak. The song must be sung to the *thul ma* each time it is milked for a year. In winter (after having milked the *thul ma* for around five months) the song is sung less frequently. The animal is accustomed to being milked after a year and is no longer sung to.

Milking songs are usually sung by women. If a family has no women to milk the livestock, men may sing them. In the past girls began learning milking and milking

⁷² *Gdang* are pens made of ropes where livestock are tied at night.

songs at approximately eleven years of age. Girls first milked livestock with their mothers and, after one or two months, they milked by themselves. They learned milking songs from their mother. Now, however, no one learns milking songs – many young women do not know such songs exist. There were less than ten people locally who could sing milking songs in 2010.

During the sixth Tibetan lunar month, yaks begin to lick everything near the house and to follow herders, who give handfuls of salt to big yaks four or five times daily over a period of twenty-five days. Lesser amounts are given to smaller yaks. Salt is thought to strengthen the yaks and encourage mating. Small amounts are given several times a day because livestock die if given too much salt at one time.

Fodder is collected from the fields and harvest begins at the end of the sixth and beginning of the seventh months. Herders at the summer pasture sometimes come to their winter house to help with farm work after they have milked the yaks twice and then return to the summer pasture before seven p.m. This requires a total of four hours of walking each day. At the end of the seventh Tibetan lunar month, full-time herding families move back to the spring pasture.

At the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth Tibetan lunar months, harvest is complete and herders begin collecting fodder on the mountains. A full-time herding family may spend a month collecting fodder. The seventh and eighth months are also the months yaks mate.

At the end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth Tibetan lunar months, herding families begin moving to their winter homes.

In the ninth Tibetan lunar month, yak, *to le*, and *mdzo* are butchered. Male livestock are generally butchered because they cannot be milked. A full-time herding family kills five to six head of livestock, while agro-pastoral families kill around three. Farmers who have few livestock kill one or two head of livestock. Some families have no livestock to slaughter since only non-breeding male livestock are butchered, and so they buy meat from herding families.

Most herders have finished their work in the tenth month and help the family thresh at their winter house. The

bu'i ma 'pregnant yaks' begin to produce less milk at this time.

Bu'i ma begin weaning that year's calves in the eleventh Tibetan lunar month. Collecting wood is a major activity at this time. Herders also have time to rest in the winter home.

Most *bu'i ma* have weaned their calves by the twelfth month, so only female livestock that did not give birth that year are milked. The first day of this month is considered to be Lo sar for livestock and dry grass or *yung ma* is fed to the livestock. People busily prepare for Lo sar during the remainder of this month.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Figure 84.

Spring and autumn houses are located three to four hours from winter homes. August 2010.

Figure 85.

Villagers live in the cottage and keep their yaks in the enclosure at night. August 2010.

Figure 86.

Spring and autumn pasture houses are built of wood and yak dung walls with bark roofs. August 2010

Figure 87.

Spring and autumn pasture houses feature wood and yak dung walls. August 2010.

Figure 88.

Inside a house at the summer pasture. The stove is made from mud reinforced with stones. Sunlight through the skylight illuminates the smoky room. November 2009.

Figure 89.

This path leads from the summer pasture to the winter house. November 2009.

Figure 90.

It is three to four hours walk from Lower DzaM mda' Village to the summer pasture where villagers live and herd livestock. November 2009.

Figure 91.

Livestock graze on mountain pasture in winter. November 2009.

Figure 92.

Two summer houses are located next to a walled livestock enclosure, and another two are to the right of the frame. One or two household members stay here with their livestock in summer. November 2009.

Figure 93.

Sgron g.yang washes her hands with her daughter's help before milking her *mdzo mo*. Women wash their hands before milking to ensure purity. November 2009.

Figure 94.

Sgron g.yang milks a *mdzo mo*. November 2009.

Figure 95.

Bkra shis 'tsho milks a female yak early in the morning on the ground floor of her house. November 2009.

Figure 96.

Herders cook yogurt and milk together for around twelve hours to make *chur ba* 'cheese'. Lumps of fresh cheese are dried outdoors for three days on plastic bags. Once hardened, it is stored or sold. November 2009.

Figure 97.

Elders take their livestock to the mountainsides three hours away on winter mornings. November 2009.

Figure 98.

Sgron g.yang returns home with a pail of milk and a wool tether. November 2009.































BUILDING AND BUILDING SONGS

Houses usually have two floors. The first is for livestock. The second floor has a shrine room, kitchen, bedrooms, living room, toilet, balcony, and storeroom. The four sides of the first floor and one side of the second floor (the back of the building) are soil and stone walls. The remainder of the second floor is wood. All furniture is also made of wood. People eat in the kitchen because it is warmer than the living room. However, people eat in the living room when there are many visitors because it is more comfortable and spacious.

A family needs one or two years to build a house. A respected *bla ma* is first invited to determine a suitable location. Next, foundations are built for the walls over ten to fifteen days. After the foundation is complete, women cannot cross it or the wall in fear they will cause them to collapse.

New houses are usually built in fields. Walls are rammed in spring and autumn because the earth freezes in winter, while the earth is too moist and people are too busy to build in summer. The family does not pay workers to perform such unskilled tasks as ramming walls and making foundations. Relatives and villagers are asked to help and people rarely refuse such requests.

The second floor is built after walls are rammed. Carpenters divide the second floor into rooms and spend two to three months making the roof. Making floorboards and ceilings for all the rooms takes about two months. Painters then paint all the rooms for three to four months. Painters and carpenters are paid, unless they are good friends or relatives. Room interiors and/ or house exteriors are left unpainted if a family lacks money to pay painters (Figure 101).

Building Songs

Building songs are traditionally sung antiphonally between two groups of men while ramming. Women do not ram walls as it is taboo for them to cross a wall once the foundations are finished (Figure 104), which is why only men sing building songs. Men sing and dance together while ramming the wall with *gyang 'tho* 'rammers' (Figure 114).

Except when women deliver earth to the wall (Figures 106-108), men sing constantly as they ram, believing that the walls lack strength if they do not. Two groups of singers compete, imparting a sense of fun rather than work. Rammers compete to see which group sings loudest and can synchronize their actions most precisely. Workers who cannot reply loudly, rhythmically, or synchronize their movements well are laughed at.

Building songs in Sman shod are called *phyo le ya*, a vocable lacking a definite meaning, and are divided into three types. The first is the opening song; the second is the standard song, which has few lyrics but is sung most frequently while building; and the third is the finishing song. All three have different melodies and lyrics, but the actions they accompany are very similar.

The opening song is sung shortly after sunrise as ramming begins. Although the melody and actions are different from other types of building songs, the largest difference is in the lyrics, which introduce and praise the ramming tools, and introduce and praise the wall from one to eight levels (Skar ma chos mdzin):

- 1(འོ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་མ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)གནམ་འཁོར་ལོ་རྩེབས་བརྒྱད་མར་ལ། གི་གི།
(ཨ་ལ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)ས་བད་མ་འདབ་བརྒྱད་ཡང་སྟེང་ལ།
- 2(འོ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་མ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)རྩོལ་རྩེ་རའི་མིས་གཅིག་བཅིགས། གི་གི།
(ཨ་ལ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)ས་སེ་འདིས་ར་ཡི་བྱང་ཞིག་བརྩེངས།

¹*o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, under the eight-spoked sky, *gi gi, a la se phyo le ya*, on the eight-petaled lotus place;

²*o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, use the Pad+ma ra⁷³
stone to make the foundation, *gi gi, a la se phyo le ya*,
use the Si 'dis ra⁷⁴ earth to ram the wall.

³(འོ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)གྲང་ཕྱི་བདོན་ཁ་མོ་གསེར་གྱི་བདོན།། གི་
གི། (ཨ་ལ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)དབུས་རྩ་སའི་ཡུལ་ནས་ཉོས་ལེ་ཡིན།།

⁴(འོ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)དྲེལ་སྒྲག་རྒྱུང་མེད་ན་ཁྱོགས་ལེ་མིན།། གི་
གི། (ཨ་ལ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)གསེར་སེར་པོ་མེད་ན་ལོན་ལེ་མིན།།

⁵(འོ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)ཡང་ནང་བདོན་ཁ་མོ་དབུས་གྱི་བདོན།།
གི་གི། (ཨ་ལ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)རྒྱ་ནག་པོ་ཡུལ་ནས་ཉོས་ལེ་ཡིན།།

⁶(འོ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)མཛོ་བྱང་དཀར་མེད་ན་ཁྱོགས་ལེ་མིན།།
གི་གི། (ཨ་ལ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)དབུས་དཀར་པོ་མེད་ན་ལོན་ལེ་མིན།།

⁷(འོ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)ཡང་གྲང་ཐོ་དྲུང་གི་ཐོ་བ་འདྲི།། བླ་ས་རྒྱ་
གི་གི། (ཨ་ལ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)རྫོང་དཀྱིལ་ནས་བཟུས་ལེ་ཡིན།།

⁸(འོ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)དྲུང་དཀར་པོ་མེད་ན་ལོན་ལེ་མིན།། སྒྲག་
གི་གི། (ཨ་ལ་སེ་ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ་)ཤར་ར་མིན་ན་ཁྱོགས་ལེ་མིན།།

³*o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, the *phyi bdem*⁷⁵ is a
shiny golden *phyi bdem*, *gi gi, a la se phyo le ya*,
bought in Lha sa.

⁴*o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, if there were no
young dark brown mules, none could carry it, *gi gi, a la
se phyo le ya*, and if there were no yellow gold, nothing
could buy it.

⁵*o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, the *nang bdem*⁷⁶ is a
shiny silver *nang bdem*, *gi gi, a la se phyo le ya*,
bought in China.

⁶*o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, if there were no
Mdzo khyung dkar⁷⁷ none could carry it, *gi gi, a la se
phyo le ya*, and if there were no white silver, nothing
could buy it.

⁷³ A hyperbolic title used to praise stone.

⁷⁴ A hyperbolic title used to praise soil.

⁷⁵ The outer part of the plank that holds soil.

⁷⁶ The inner part of the plank that holds soil.

⁷⁷ A hyperbolic title used to praise *mdzo*.

⁷*'o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, The gyang 'tho is a white conch gyang 'tho, gi gi, a la se phyo le ya, bought in the rgya rdzong⁷⁸ forest.

⁸*'o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, If there were no young men, none could carry it, gi gi, a la se phyo le ya, and if there were no white conch, nothing could buy it.

¹(འ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་མ་སེ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་)གྲང་པ་གཅིག་པ་གཉིས་པ་མ་གསུམ། གི་གི། (མ་ལ་སེ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་)གྲང་པ་གསུམ་རིག་གསུམ་མགོན་པོ་བཞུགས།

²(འ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་མ་སེ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་)གྲང་པ་གཅིག་པ་གཉིས་པ་མ་བཞི། གི་གི། (མ་ལ་སེ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་)གྲང་པ་བཞི་རྒྱལ་ཆེན་ལྔ་བཞི་བཞུགས།

³(འ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་མ་སེ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་)གྲང་པ་གཅིག་པ་གཉིས་པ་མ་ལྔ། གི་གི། (མ་ལ་སེ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་)གྲང་པ་ལྔ་རྒྱལ་བ་རིགས་ལྔ་བཞུགས།

⁴(འ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་མ་སེ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་)གྲང་པ་གཅིག་པ་གཉིས་པ་མ་དྲུག། གི་གི། (མ་ལ་སེ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་)གྲང་པ་དྲུག་ཆེ་རིང་མཆོད་དྲུག་བཞུགས།

⁵(འ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་མ་སེ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་)གྲང་པ་གཅིག་པ་གཉིས་པ་མ་བདུན། གི་གི། (མ་ལ་སེ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་)གྲང་པ་བདུན་མཆོད་ལྔ་སྟུན་བདུན་བཞུགས།

⁶(འ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་མ་སེ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་)གྲང་པ་གཅིག་པ་གཉིས་པ་མ་བརྒྱད། གི་གི། (མ་ལ་སེ་སྤྱེལ་ཡ་)གྲང་པ་བརྒྱད་བཟླ་ཤིས་རྟགས་བརྒྱད་བཞུགས།

¹*'o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, among the first, second, and third layers of the wall, gi gi, a la se phyo le ya, Rig gsum mgon po⁷⁹ sit in the third layer.

²*'o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, among the first, second, and fourth layers of the wall, gi gi, a la se phyo le ya, Rgyal chen sde bzhi⁸⁰ sit in the fourth layer.

³*'o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, among the first, second, and fifth layers of the wall, gi gi, a la se phyo le ya, Rgyal ba rig lnga⁸¹ sit in the fifth layer

⁷⁸ A hyperbolic title used to praise forests.

⁷⁹ A name for three deities: 'Jam dpal dbyangs, Spyan ras gzigs, and Phyags na rdo rje.

⁸⁰ Four kingdoms of the four directions.

⁸¹ The five deities of five directions: Rdo rje sems pa from the east, 'Rin chen 'byung lan from the south, Snang ba mtha'

⁴*'o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, the first, second, and sixth layers of the wall, *gi gi, a la se phyo le ya*, Tshe ring mched drug⁸² sit in the sixth layer.

⁵*'o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, the first, second, and seventh layers of the wall, *gi gi, a la se phyo le ya*, Mchod lha spun bdun⁸³ sit in the seventh layer.

⁶*'o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, the first, second, and eighth layers of the wall, *gi gi, a la se phyo le ya*, Bkra shis rtag brgyad⁸⁴ sit in the eighth layer.

¹(འ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)གྲང་ལྷག་མགོ་རྩང་མི་ལྷག་དང་འདྲ། གི་གི།
(ཨ་ལ་སེ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)ལྷག་རི་མོ་ཤར་ལེ་འཕགས་ལེ་ཤོག།

²(འ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)ཡང་དེ་རྗེས་ཨ་ཕོ་གཟིག་དང་འདྲ། གི་གི།
(ཨ་ལ་སེ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)གཟིག་ཐིག་ལེ་ཤར་ལེ་འཕགས་ལེ་ཤོག།

³(འ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)ཡང་དེ་རྗེས་ཨ་ཕོ་གྲང་དང་འདྲ། གི་གི།
(ཨ་ལ་སེ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)གྲང་ཨ་ལོང་ཤར་ལེ་འཕགས་ལེ་ཤོག།

⁴(འ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)ཡང་དེ་རྗེས་ཨ་ཕོ་མ་དང་འདྲ། གི་གི། (ཨ་ལ་སེ་བྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)མ་ག་ཁུལ་རྒྱས་ལེ་འཕགས་ལེ་ཤོག།

¹*'o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, the man who rams the corner of the wall resembles a tiger, *gi gi, a la se phyo le ya*, its stripes shall shine.

²*'o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, the next man resembles a leopard, *gi gi, a la se phyo le ya*, its spots shall shine.

³*'o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, the next man resembles a gung, *gi gi, a la se phyo le ya*, its rings shall shine.

⁴*'o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, the next man resembles a fox, *gi gi, a la se phyo le ya*, its fur shall

yas from the west, Don yod grub pa from the north, and Rnam pa snang mdzad from the center.

⁸² The 'six long-lived things' are the long-lived person, deer, bird, water, rock, and tree.

⁸³ Our local consultants could not explain the 'seven offering deities'.

⁸⁴ The Eight Auspicious Symbols – see footnote twenty-three.

shine.

- ¹(འོ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)རྩོག་ཡུ་འབྲུག་འདྲ་བའི་གྲང་བ་ཚོས། གི་
གི། (ཨ་ལ་སེ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)དགྲ་ཨ་ཕྱོན་འདྲ་བའི་གྲང་ཞིག་བརྒྱུངས།
- ²(འོ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)ཚོད་ཐང་དཀར་འདྲ་བའི་གྲང་བ་ཚོས།
གི་གི། (ཨ་ལ་སེ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)བྲག་དཀར་འདྲ་བའི་གྲང་ཞིག་བརྒྱུངས།
- ³(འོ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)བྱ་ཁུ་ལོ་འདྲ་བའི་གྲང་བ་ཚོས། གི་གི། (ཨ་
ལ་སེ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)ཤིང་ཤུག་ཆུང་འདྲ་བའི་གྲང་ཞིག་བརྒྱུངས།
- ⁴(འོ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)ཉ་གསེར་ཉ་འདྲ་བའི་གྲང་བ་ཚོས། གི་གི།
(ཨ་ལ་སེ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)ཆུ་གཙང་ཆབ་འདྲ་བའི་གྲང་ཞིག་བརྒྱུངས།
- ⁵(འོ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)སང་དཀར་མོ་འདྲ་བའི་གྲང་བ་ཚོས། གི་
གི། (ཨ་ལ་སེ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)གངས་དཀར་པོ་འདྲ་བའི་གྲང་ཞིག་བརྒྱུངས།
- ⁶(འོ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)འབྲོང་བྲེ་སེར་འདྲ་བའི་གྲང་བ་ཚོས། གི་
གི། (ཨ་ལ་སེ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)རྩ་ལྷག་པོ་འདྲ་བའི་གྲང་ཞིག་བརྒྱུངས།
- ⁷(འོ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་མོ་སེ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)སྟག་དམར་གཡག་འདྲ་བའི་གྲང་བ་ཚོས།
གི་གི། (ཨ་ལ་སེ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་)ནགས་རྩ་རྩོང་འདྲ་བའི་གྲང་ཞིག་བརྒྱུངས།
- ¹*o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, the rammers
resembling southern dragons built a wall, *gi gi, a la se
phyo le ya*, resembling the blue sky.
- ²*o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, the rammers
resembling white-chested eagles built a wall, *gi gi, a la
se phyo le ya*, resembling a white rocky mountain.
- ³*o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, the rammers
resembling *khu lo*⁸⁵ birds built a wall, *gi gi, a la se
phyo le ya*, resembling a young juniper tree.
- ⁴*o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, the rammers
resembling golden fish built a wall, *gi gi, a la se phyo
le ya*, resembling a river.
- ⁵*o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, the rammers
resembling snow lions built a wall, *gi gi, a la se phyo le
ya*, resembling a glacier.
- ⁶*o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, the rammers
resembling brown-faced wild yaks built a wall, *gi gi, a*

⁸⁵ A bird that often nests in junipers.

la se phyo le ya, resembling a brown rocky mountain.

⁷*o phyo le ya phyo le ya mo se phyo le*, The rammers resembling fierce tigers built a wall, *gi gi, a la se phyo le ya*, resembling a lush forest.

The lyrics of the second building song consist of repeated vocables. There are five different tunes and the movements are the same as those used in the first song.

The lyrics of these building songs are:

¹ཨ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡར་མ་སེ་ཨ་ཕྱ་ལེ་ཡ།

¹*o phyo le ya phyo le yar mo se o phyo le ya.*

These syllables are repeated. This is the most commonly sung building song when walls are rammed. The song is sung constantly, except when women deliver earth to the wall.

The last type of building song is sung when workers are finishing ramming the wall. The lyrics of the last building song express good wishes for the new building and for the village in the future (*Skar ma chos mdzin*):

¹འོ་དགའ་མོ་སྦྱང་མོ། སྦྱང་གྱི་ཡར་ནང་ལ། སྦྱང་གྱི་ཡར་ནང་ལ།

²འོ་སྦྱང་གྱི་ཡར་ནང་ལ། གསེར་གྱི་སྒོ་བཞི་བཙུགས། གསེར་གྱི་སྒོ་བཞི་
བཙུགས།

³འོ་ཟླ་ལྷང་སྦྱང་རེད། དགའ་མོ་བཟ་རེ་ཤིས། སྦྱང་མོ་ཡང་རེ་བྱབ།

¹Joy and happiness in the happy upper part, in the happy upper part.

²In the happy upper part build a golden gate, add a golden gate.

³Auspiciousness dwells in the *bla ma's* happy place, and joy rises up again.

4འོ་དགའ་མོ་སྦྱང་མོ། སྦྱང་གྱི་ཡར་ནང་ལ། སྦྱང་གྱི་ཡར་ནང་ལ།

5འོ་སྦྱང་གྱི་ཡར་ནང་ལ། དུལ་གྱི་སྒོ་བཞི་བཙུགས། དུལ་གྱི་སྒོ་བཞི་
བཙུགས།

6འོ་དཔོན་ལྷང་སྦྱང་ལྷང་རེད། དགའ་མོ་བཟ་རེ་ཤིས། སྦྱང་མོ་ཡང་རེ་བྱབ།

⁴Joy and happiness in the happy upper part, in the happy upper part.

⁵In the happy upper part add a silver gate, add a silver gate.

⁶Auspiciousness dwells in the leader's happy place and joy rises up again.

7འོ་དགའ་མོ་སྦྱིད་མོ།། སྦྱིད་ཀྱི་ཡར་ནང་ལ།། སྦྱིད་ཀྱི་ཡར་ནང་ལ།།

8འོ་སྦྱིད་ཀྱི་ཡར་ནང་ལ།། ཅུང་གི་སྒོ་བཞི་བཅུགས།། ཅུང་གི་སྒོ་བཞི་བཅུགས།།

9འོ་ཤག་ལུང་སྦྱིད་ལུང་རེད།། དགའ་མོ་བག་རེ་ཤིས།། སྦྱིད་མོ་ཡང་རེ་བྱུབ།།

⁷Joy and happiness in the happy upper part, in the happy upper part.

⁸In the happy upper part add a white conch gate, add a white conch gate.

⁹Auspiciousness dwells in the unyielding men's happy place and joy rises up again.

After the last building song, people go home or stay and clean the area where they rammed the wall. The most difficult and important work has now been completed. The wall builders are given three or four meals a day and the workers may later ask for help when they build a house.

The first and last song are no longer sung in Sman shod. They were each only sung once during the building of a house, and have mostly been forgotten. Less than ten men can sing all three building songs. Some remember the melodies but do not know the lyrics. Some young men have never heard of such songs.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Figure 99.

Villagers transport pine logs by floating them downstream from the upper part of the Sman chu River. August 2010.

Figure 100.

An unfinished, unpainted house without windows, roofs, and floors. August 2010.

Figure 101.

Pine cone extract is used to paint the upper half of houses. The small protruding room is the toilet. August 2010.

Figure 102.

Villagers collect immature pine cones from the nearby forest and boil them in water until the liquid becomes dark red. This extract is then used to paint house exteriors. August 2010.

Figure 103.

A completed three story house. August 2010.

Figure 104.

Rdzong sar Monastery began building a new temple beside Rdzong sar Seminary, north of the Gad dmar khug Market in 2009. Photograph by 'Chi med rdo rje. October 2009.

Figure 105.

Villagers from Phu ma, Mda' ma, and Hyo pa Townships contributed labor to the construction of this temple. Rdzong sar Seminary is in the background. October 2009.

Figure 106.

Women dig and fill bags with earth and then transport them to the top of the wall. October 2009.

Figure 107.

Women carry the earth to the top of the wall in bags weighing around sixty kilograms each. October 2009.

Figure 108.

Women carry the earth up temporary ramps to the walls where men ram it into place. October 2009.

Figure 109.

Men ram the wall while singing and dancing. October 2009.

Figure 110.

Men sing and jump on the wall in a choreographed wall-building dance. October 2009.

Figure 111.

Men stand atop the prayer hall wall with their ramming sticks. Photograph by Zla ba grab pa. October 2009.

Figure 112.

A man hits the earth with all his strength. This prayer hall required two lines of men to ram it, each facing the wall's edges. Photograph by Zla ba grab pa. October 2009.

Figure 113.

Bya sa (born 1947) is one of the few older men who helped build the wall. Photograph by Zla ba grab pa. October 2009.

Figure 114.

Gyang 'tho' have the word Bod 'Tibetan' written on them. October 2009.

Figure 115.

Women relax and chat as men ram the wall. The wooden supports have been collected from surrounding forests. October 2009.

Figure 116.

Women from Sman shod relax, drink, and eat during a break from transporting earth. October 2009.

Figure 117.

All workers have lunch together. The pot is filled with black tea. October 2009.

Figure 118.

Some people bring their own food to the building site and eat with others. October 2009.

Figure 119.

The new temple with the local monastery and monks' quarters in the background. October 2009.

Figure 120.

Women sit in front and men stand behind in preparation for a photograph. October 2009.

Figure 121.

All the workers at the monastery's new prayer hall site pose with the head *bla ma* and leader. About 400 people worked to build the temple. October 2009.



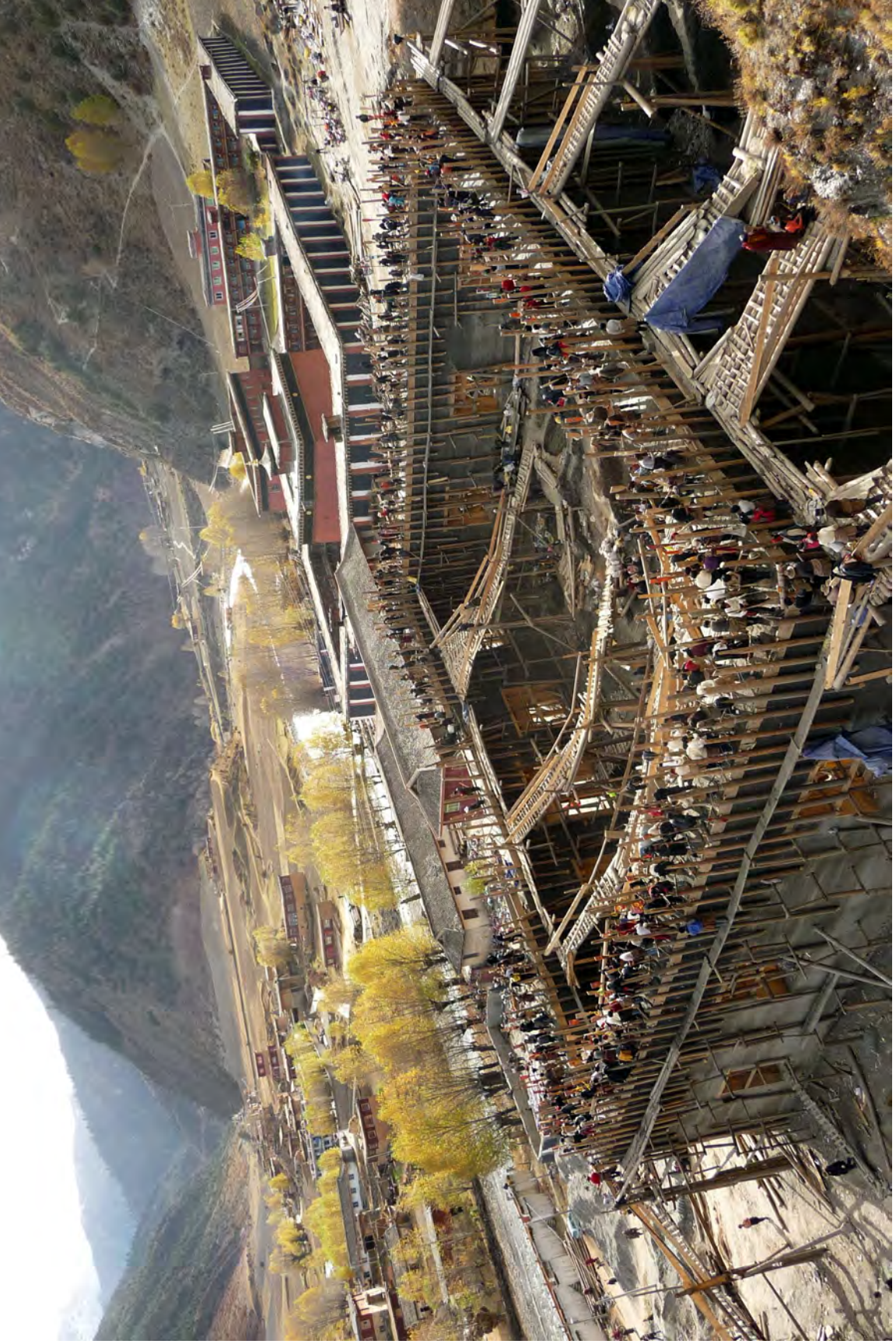










































Non-English Wordlist

'Bol yul འབོལ་ཡུལ། village name

'bri འབྲི། female yak

'Bri chu འབྲི་ཆུ། river name

'Chi med rdo rje འཆི་མེད་རྡོ་རྗེ། personal name

'dur skor འདུར་སྐོར། headman

'dzom bro འཛོམ་བྲོ། gathering dance song

'Gyur chen འགྱུར་ཆེན། family name

'Gyur chung འགྱུར་ཆུང་། family name

'Jam dbyangs pha mu འཇམ་དབྱངས་ཕ་མུ། personal name

'Jams mda' འཇམ་མས་མདའ། township name

'khor lo འཁོར་ལོ། prayer wheel

'Phrin las chos mtsho འཕྲིན་ལས་ཆོས་མཚོ། personal name

'Phrin las phun 'tshogs འཕྲིན་ལས་ཕུན་འཛོགས། personal name

A

A bo ma ཨ་བོ་མ། personal name

A dkar mtsho ཨ་དཀར་མཚོ། personal name

a la ཨ་ལ། harvest song

a la phyo ཨ་ལ་ཕྱོ། threshing song

B

bar do བར་དོ། intermediary realm between death and
reincarnation

Bde skyid བདེ་སྐྱིད། personal name

Bka' 'gyur བཀའ་འགྱུར། 108 volumes of the Buddha's teaching

bkra shis བརྒྱ་ཤིས། closing dance

Bkra shis lha rtse བརྒྱ་ཤིས་ལྷ་རྩེ། place name

Bkra shis rdo rje བརྒྱ་ཤིས་རྡོ་རྗེ། personal name

Bkra shis rtag brgyad བརྒྱ་ཤིས་རྟག་བརྒྱད། Eight Auspicious
Symbols

bla ma བླ་མ། lama
blo bzung སྒོ་བཟུང་། decoration name
Blo gros phun tshogs སྒོ་གྲོས་ཕུན་ཚོགས། personal name
Bo nyed བོ་ཉེད། personal name
Bod བོད། Tibet(an)
bro dpon བློ་དཔོན། dance leader
bro mchod བློ་མཚན། offering dance song
bsang བསང་། incense
bu'i ma བུའི་མ། pregnant livestock
Bya bkra rdo rje བྱ་བཀྲ་རྡོ་རྗེ། personal name
Bya sa བྱ་ས། personal name
Bye tham བྱེ་ཐམ། family name
Byo lu tshang བྱོ་ལུ་ཚང་། family name
bzhad བཞད། type of dance with fast steps and dramatic
 gestures that is performed by men and women together
bzho བཞོ། to milk

C

Chengdu 成都 place name
chur ba རྩུར་བ། cheese
Ci jo ཅུ་རྫོ། village name

D

Da ru ཌ་རུ། small drum used in religious rituals; also
 indicates a two-faced person
Dben zen དབེན་ཟེན། personal name
dbyar ri དབྱར་རི། summer pasture
Dge chen དགེ་ཆེན། monastery name
Dge rab phun ma tshang དགེ་རབ་ཕུན་མ་ཚང་། family name
Dge rab shed po can དགེ་རབ་ཤེད་པོ་ཅན། personal name
Dge rab sog mo tshang དགེ་རབ་སོག་མོ་ཚང་། family name
Dkar mdzes དཀར་མཛེས། place name

dkon mchog gsum དཀོན་མཆོག་གསུམ། the Three Jewels are the
Buddha, Dharma, and the Sangha

Dkun dga' phun tshogs དཀུན་དགའ་ཕུན་འཛོགས། personal name
dor bkra རྩོད་བརྒྱ། trousers

Dpal yul དཔལ་ཡུལ། county name

dpyid ri དཔྱིད་རི། spring pasture

DzaM mda' རྩོ་མདའ། place name

DzaM mda' mar gron རྩོ་མདའ་མར་གྲོང་། village name

DzaM mda' yar grong རྩོ་མདའ་ཡར་གྲོང་། village name

G

G.yu thog yon tan mgon pos man bcos gter gnas གཡུ་ཐོག་ཡོན་ཏན་མགོན་པོས་མཆོག་གསེས་
ཏན་མགོན་པོ་སྦྱན་བཅོས་གཏེར་གནས། Yuthok Yondengonpo
Medical Association

g.yugs skor གཡུགས་སྒོར། threshing tool

g.yung drung གཡུང་རྩུང་། Buddhist swastika

ga'u གཱ། a metal box containing an amulet

Gad dmar khug གད་དམར་ཁུག། place name

gdang གདང་། pen made of ropes where livestock are tied
during the night

Ge sar གེ་སར། a legendary Tibetan king and deity

Gling གླིང་། place and kingdom name

glu gdan གླུ་གདན། rug song

glu mchod གླུ་མཆོད། offering song

glu mgo གླུ་མགོ། head of the song

gnyan གཉན། type of powerful non-human spirit

gro ma གྲོ་མ། wild yam

Gser khang gang ma གསེར་ཁང་གང་མ། temple name

Gshes nyes གཤེས་ཉེས། family name

gung གུང་། spotted animal that resembled a fox but was
somewhat larger. It was white with black spots and

lived in mountain forests. Locals believe it to be extinct.

Gwa gu གྲ་གུ place name

gyang 'tho གྲུང་འཛོ། building tool

gzhung bro གཞུང་བོ། middle dance song

H

Ham mda' ཧམ་མདའ། village name

Hyo pa ཧྱོ་པ། township name

K

Kangding 康定 place name

kha btags ཁ་བདགས། white scarf that symbolizes
auspiciousness and is used to greet respected people

khu lo ཁུ་ལོ། a type of bird

klu ཁུ། serpent deity

Krug krug ཁུག་ཁུག། personal name

L

la rtsod ལ་རྩོད། la yug song competition

la yug ལ་ཡུག། love song

Lha chen byams pa phun tshogs ལྷ་ཆེན་བྱམས་པ་ཕུན་མཛོག།
personal name

Lha mo ལྷ་མོ། personal name

Lha mo 'tsho ལྷ་མོ་འཛོ། personal name

Lha sa ལྷ་ས། place name

Lo sar ལོ་སར། the Tibetan New Year period

M

ma Ni མ་ཏི། mantra

Ma Ni dung sgrub མ་ཏི་དུང་སྐྱབ། ritual in which one billion
ma Ni are recited

ma zi མ་ཟི། a type of knife

Mchod lha spun bdun མཆོད་ལྷ་སྐྱབ་བདུན། seven offering deities

Mda' ma མདའ་མ། township name

Mdzo khyung dkar མཛོ་ཁྱུང་དཀར། hyperbolic name for a *mdzo*
mdzo མཛོ། yak-cow hybrid

mdzo mo མཛོ་མོ། female yak-cow hybrid

me cha མེ་ཆ། flint used and worn by males that is attached to
a bag containing horse manure. A fire is made by
placing the dry manure on a stone and striking the stone
with the flint.

mgo kris མགོ་གྲིས། headband

mgu zi མགུ་བེ། type of knife

mgur མགུར། honorific word for song

mgur ma མགུར་མ། fodder cutting song

mgur mo མགུར་མོ། divination song

mgur mo bzhang མགུར་མོ་བཞག། to tell one's fortune with rings

Mkha' gsar མཐའ་གསར། village name

Mkhar dge མཐར་དག། family name

mthu bkag མཐུ་བཀག། curse blocker

mu rtsa མུ་རྩ། grass growing at the edges of fields

N

nang bdem ནང་བདེམ། inner part of a wall levee

Ngas g.yang bdag khyod ངས་གཡང་བདག་ཁྱེད། You are
responsible for my prosperity.

Nor bu bzang po རོ་བུ་བཟང་པོ། personal name

Nyang rong ཉག་རོང་། county name

Nyang rong log skad ཉག་རོང་ལོག་སྐད། language name

Nyi ma 'tshor ཉི་མ་འཚོར། personal name

Nyin mo gzhang ཉིན་མོ་གཙང་། village name

O

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM ཨྌ་མ་ཉི་པདྨེ་ཧཱུྃ། Buddhist mantra

P

Pad+ma ra པདྨ་ར། hyperbolic name for a stone

par khug པར་ཁུག། pouch that may hold needle and thread or money

pha ri ཕ་རི། opposite side of a valley

phrug ཕུག། robe

Phu ma ཕུ་མ། township name

Phu ta bkra shis seng ge ཕུ་ཐ་བཀྲ་ཤིས་སང་གོ། personal name

phyi bdem ཕྱི་བདེམ། outer part of a wall levee

phyo le ya ཕྱོ་ལེ་ཡ། wall-building song

Q

Qinghai ཀུན་མཁའ་ཁུ་ཁུ། place name

R

Rdzong sar རྫོང་སར། place and monastery name

Rdzong sar bshad grwa རྫོང་སར་བཤད་གྲ། Rdzong sar Monastery's monks quarters

rgya g.yu gru ka རྒྱ་གཡུ་གུ་ཀ། turquoise that Sman shod people consider fluorescent: also, a hyperbolic title that praises the turquoise

Rgya rdzong རྒྱ་རྫོང་། hyperbolic title for a forest

Rgyal ba rig lnga རྒྱལ་བ་རིག་ལྷ། five deities of five directions

Rgyal chen sde bzhi རྒྱལ་ཆེན་ལྷེ་བཞི། four kings of the four directions

Rgyal rgan རྒྱལ་རྒྱན། village name

Ri kha རི་ཁ། village name

Rig gsum mgon po རིག་གསུམ་མགོན་པོ། name for three deities

Rin chen lha mo རིན་ཆེན་ལྷ་མོ། personal name

Rin chen rdo rje རིན་ཆེན་རྡོ་རྗེ། personal name

Rma thang རྩ་ཐང་། village name

rmog རྩོག། two-thirds of an hectare

rnam lcag phur par རྩམ་ལྷག་ཕུར་པར། *rnam lcag* refers to metal found in the ground at the site of a lightning strike.

Phur ba is a 'ritual dagger'. *Rnam lcag phur ba* thus suggests a ritual dagger made from metal found in the ground at the site of a lightning strike.

Rong me རོང་མེ། village name

Rta'u རྟཱ། county name

Rta'u log skad རྟཱ་ལོག་སྐལ། language name

rtsam pa རྩམ་པ། roasted barley flour

Rtse dung རྩེ་དུང་། village name

Rtsis thog རྩིས་ཐོག། village name

rtsi tog རྩེ་རྟོག good quality grass that grows on mountaintops where livestock are taken to feed

S

Sa skya ས་སྐུ། Tibetan Buddhist sect

sbyag pa སྤྱག་པ། wood or metal harrow

Sde dge སྡེ་དགོ། county name

Sde dge bro chen སྡེ་དགོ་བོ་ཆེན། Sde dge circle dance

Sde dge mdun bro སྡེ་དགོ་མདུན་བོ། Sde dge headman's dance

Se rang སེ་རང་། place name

Sgo khang སྐོ་ཁང་། village name

Sgron g.yang སྐྱོན་གཡང་། personal name

Si 'dis ra སི་འདིས་ར། a hyperbolic title used to praise soil

Sichuan སུའུ་ཁུ། place name

Skal bzang rgya mtsho སྐལ་བཟང་རྒྱ་མཚོ། personal name

Skar ma chos 'dzin སྐར་མ་ཚོས་འདྲིན། personal name

Skar ma chos 'tsho སྐར་མ་ཚོས་འཚོ། personal name

skya yu སྐུ་ཡུ། weeding

Sman chu སྐན་ཅུ། river name

Sman shod སྐན་ཤོད། place name

Sman shod dpon lung སྐན་ཤོད་དཔོན་ལུང་། valley of leaders

Smyung gnas སྐུང་གནས། fasting

smyung gnas lha khang སྐྱུང་གནས་ལྷ་ཁང་། temple for fasting
ritual

snam ma སྐྱམ་མ། grass of even height that grows in
monoculture meadows

snu zhing སྤུ་ཞིང་། fertile field

sog སོག། grass used as fodder for livestock

Sting lhung སྤིང་ལུང་། place name

ston ri སྤོན་རི། fall pasture

T

thang kha ཐང་ཀ་། traditional Tibetan religious images painted,
embroidered, or applied on cloth that are considered
to be offerings to the Buddha and usually hung on the
walls of temples and household shrines

thul le ཐུལ་ལེ། female yak that has given birth for the first
time.

thul ma ཐུལ་མ། see *thul le*

to le ཏོ་ལེ། *mdzo mo*-cow hybrid

Tshe ring mched drug ཨོ་རིང་ཆེད་དུག་། six long-lived things

Tshong chos 'tsho ཨོང་ཆོས་འཕྱོ། personal name

Tshong lha mo ཨོང་ལྷ་མོ། personal name

tshu ri ཐུ་རི། this side of a valley or river

U

Ü-Tsang དབུས་གཙང་། place name, also Dbus gtsang

W

Wutai 五台山 mountain name

Y

ya ma ཡ་མ། livestock that gave birth in the previous year

yar zi ཡར་ཟེ། type of knife

yung ma ཡུང་མ། local root crop

yus ba ཡུས་བ། winter house

Z

Zhing mo རིང་མོ། family name

Zi chu ཟི་ཅུ། river name

Zla ba grag pa ལྷ་བ་གྲག་པ། personal name

Zla ba sgrol ma ལྷ་བ་སྒོལ་མ། personal name